



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

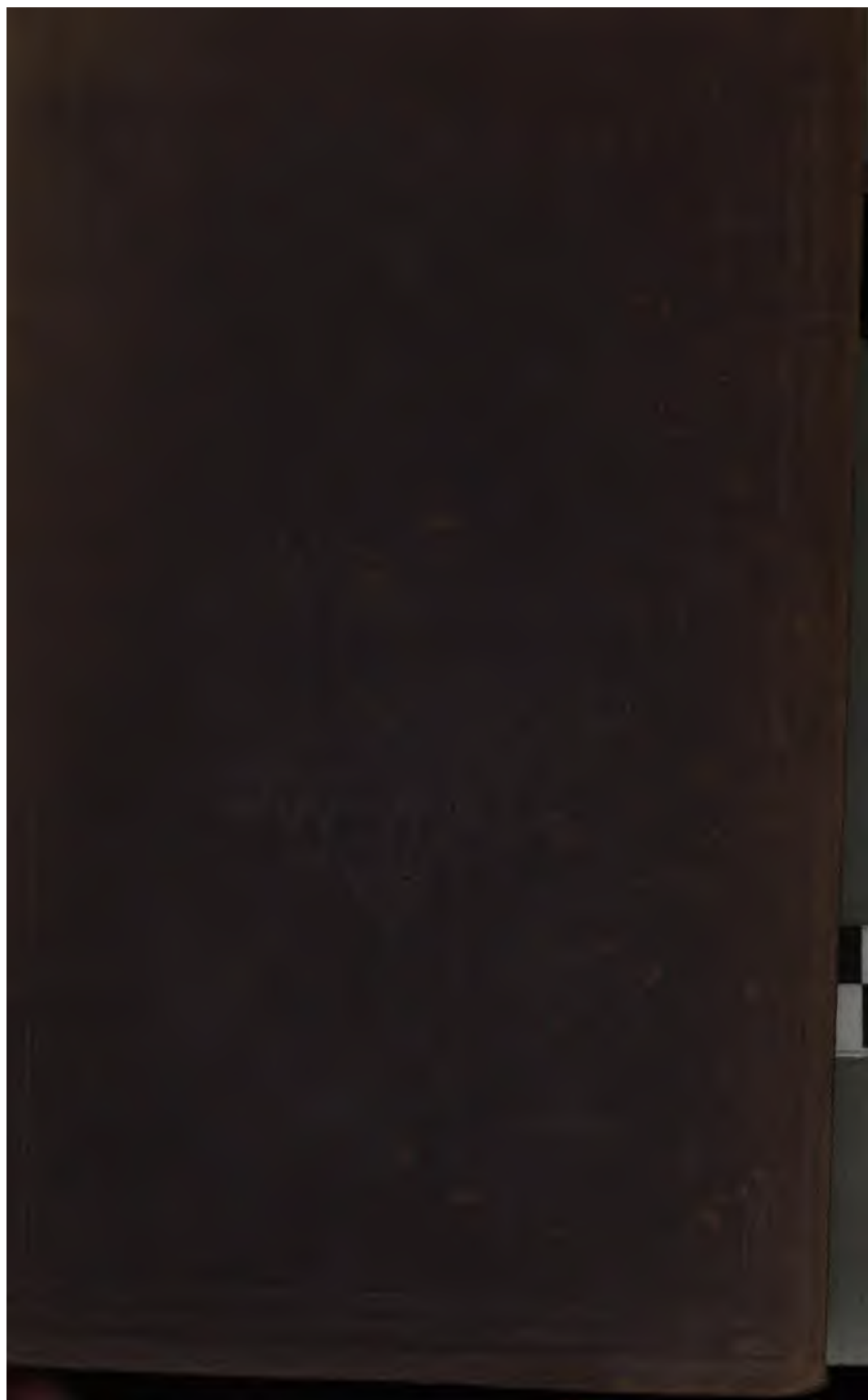
Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

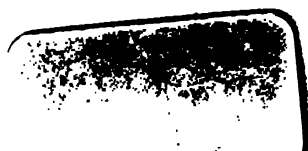
- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

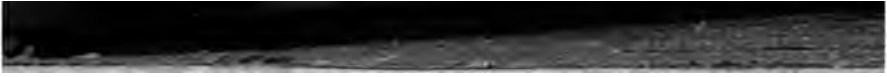


70. a. 39.









THE
HISTORY OF LITERATURE;

OR,

THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF LANGUAGE, WRITING,
AND LETTERS, FROM THE EARLIEST AGES OF
ANTIQUITY TO THE PRESENT TIME.

Μωμῆσεται τις μαλλον ἢ μιμῆσεται.

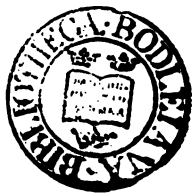
IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

By SIR WILLIAM BOYD, A. M.—M. D.
AUTHOR OF THE EPITOME OF THE HISTORY OF LITERATURE,
THE GUIDE TO ITALY, &c.

LONDON:
LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, & LONGMAN,
PATERNOSTER ROW.

MDCCCXLI.



LONDON:
PRINTED BY E. JUSTINE AND SON,
MARK LANE.

P R E F A C E.

IN presenting to the public the first volume of "THE HISTORY OF LITERATURE," the Author rejoices that there is now a prospect of an important chasm in history being filled up, and that all will have it in their power to trace the rise and progress of learning, from the ages of antiquity to the present day.

A passionate love of literature, has long been considered by the Author as the bright star of his life; placed in society, in a position not the most happy, that of being descended from a family of the highest rank, with very limited means at his command—he has found the study of literature a source of great happiness and consolation, under the pressure of every anxiety.

The Author cheerfully submits his work to the intelligence and taste of the public, and hopes that he may meet with such patronage as will enable him to bring it to a conclusion; he does so, fearless of fair and free opinion; unfortunately, however, in modern days, abuse is often mistaken for criticism; or, as it is expressed in the transla-

CONTENTS OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

CHAPTER I.

REMARKS ON LITERATURE.

The advantages of knowledge and an acquaintance with science
—The real and continued pleasure which the study of literature affords. *Page 1 to 3.*

CHAPTER II.

ON LANGUAGE.

Language—Sensation—Ideas—Speech—Whether a divine gift, or of human invention—Mechanism, and progress of language—Pronunciation, inflexion, gesture, and style—Differences between the ancient and modern languages—Its present character. *Page 3 to 14.*

CHAPTER III.

ON WRITING.

Writing, its usefulness—Picture-writing—Hieroglyphics—Allegorical symbols—Alphabet of syllables—Alphabet of letters—Number of elementary marks for sounds requisite to form a written language, and by which ideas were conveyed to the understanding through the eye—Orthography—Writing, where and when invented—Modes of writing—Modern discoveries—Materials in use—Comparison between spoken and written language. *Page 14 to 26.*

CHAPTER IV.

THE ORIENTAL NATIONS ESTABLISHED.

Or, Remarks on the era of the creation of the world—Our ignorance of the first spoken language—Difficulties of the historian from the want of authentic records—Observations on the state of mankind after the flood—The migration—The oriental nations established—The Chaldeans, Egyptians, Phœnicians, and their descendants the Carthaginians—The Hebrews, Syrians, and Arabians—India and the Sanscrit—Concluding review. *Page 26 to 53.*

CHAPTER V.

Rise and progress of letters, writing, and literature among the Greeks, with their Chronology; or, Ancient Names of Greece—Principal States—When founded—The great Antiquity of Greece as compared with the other Nations of Europe—Rise of Letters—Literature indigenous to the soil of Greece, although the rudiments of science, and the alphabet, appear to have been derived from the Egyptians and Phœnicians—The period when letters became general—Age of Homer—First, or Grecian age of learning—Chronology of Greece, its dependence on the Parian chronicle, or Arundelian marble, and the Olympic games. *Page 53 to 69.*

CHAPTER VI.

POETRY OF GREECE.

Of greater antiquity than prose composition—Its different species—Comparison between ancient and modern poetry—Greek poets—Homer, Hesiod, Archilochus, Sappho, Alcæus, Simonides, Anacreon, Pindar, and Theocritus—Illustrations—The *Scolia* of the Greek Poets. *Page 69 to 123.*

CHAPTER VII.

ORIGIN OF THE GREEK DRAMA.

Thespis—View of the Greek Stage—Its various parts—Great Tragic Poets—Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides—Illustrations. *Page 123 to 224.*

CHAPTER VIII.

GREEK COMEDY.

The ancient, the middle, and the new—Celebrated Comic Poets—Eupolis, Cratinas, Aristophanes, and Menander—Illustrations. *Page 224 to 246.*

CHAPTER IX.

Other Poets of Greece, not usually mentioned in the first or Grecian age of learning—Bion, Moschus, Callimachus, Apollonius Rhodius, and Meleager—Illustrations. *Page 264 to 277.*

CHAPTER X.

ON HISTORY.

Its definition, and essential difference from the Physical and Mathematical Sciences—Its grand divisions or eras—Tradition—Written, and Printed History—Different methods of treating it—Requisites necessary to form a good Historical Writer—Celebrated Historians of Greece, Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon. *Page 278 to 302.*

CHAPTER XI.

The rise and progress of Philosophy in Greece—The Ionic Sect founded by Thales—The Italian by Pythagoras—The Eleatic by Xenophanes—their doctrines and disciples. *Page 302 to 341.*

CHAPTER XII.

The Socratic school founded by Socrates; his life, doctrines, and death. *Page 341 to 360.*

CHAPTER XIII.

The Academic Sect founded by Plato—The Peripatetic by Aristotle—The Cynic, Stoic, Epicurean, and Sceptic Sects—Observations on Grecian Philosophy. *Page 360 to 403.*

CHAPTER XIV.

Orators of Greece—Lysias, Isocrates, Æschines, and Demosthenes. *Page 403 to 428.*

Price for the complete Work, £1 16s.,

OR

For each Volume, 9s.

ERRATA.

Page 37, line 14, for "Syrene," read "Syene."

44, line 15, for "embued," read "imbued."

67, line 14, for "mroe," read "more."

123, line 1, for "miue," read "nine."



CHAPTER I.

REMARKS ON LITERATURE.

THE ADVANTAGES OF KNOWLEDGE AND AN ACQUAINTANCE
WITH SCIENCE—THE REAL AND CONTINUED PLEASURE
WHICH THE STUDY OF LITERATURE AFFORDS.

In a work so comprehensive, so interesting, and the author hopes that he may add so important, as the history of literature; or, the rise and progress of language, writing, and letters, from the earliest ages of antiquity to the present time; it may be considered necessary to commence with some observations of a general nature. The author has therefore thought it more judicious to condense such observations in this brief chapter, rather than to resort to the tedious task of introducing them through the medium of a long preface.

The literature of nations may be regarded as the most attractive feature of their history; it is at once the effect of leisure and refinement, and the means of increasing and perpetuating civilization. Literature also possesses an extensive moral agency; and it has a close connexion with the glory, the freedom, and the felicity of a people: but what renders it chiefly interesting, is the influence which it exercises on the dignity and happiness of human nature, by improving the character, and enlarging the capacity of our species. Dr. Johnson says, "There is no part of history so generally useful, and so deeply interesting, as that which relates the progress of the human mind, the gradual improvement of reason, the successive advances of science, the vicissitudes of learning and ignorance, which are the

having little time or inclination to enter into that refined speculation, which conducts us to the knowledge of government, of policy, and of law, the advantages of religion and morality, with the duties which we owe to ourselves as individuals, and to each other as members of society. Intelligence, however, appears to be now in a progressive state; and we may look forward with confidence to the hope, that the general diffusion of knowledge will dispel those clouds of darkness which have hitherto enveloped the human mind.

To pass our time in the study of literature and science, in learning what others have discovered, and in extending the boundaries of knowledge, has in all ages of the world been considered as the most dignified and happy of human occupations; and the name of philosopher, or lover of wisdom, is justly merited and given to those who lead such a life. Besides, the pleasures and solid benefits of such a course go hand in hand; for there is no system more calculated to elevate the mind, and fill it with generous and noble sentiments; so that rational beings are bound by every motive of interest and duty, to direct their faculties to pursuits which are found to be the path of virtue, as well as happiness.

CHAPTER II.

ON LANGUAGE.

LANGUAGE — SENSATION — IDEAS — SPEECH — WHETHER A DIVINE GIFT, OR OF HUMAN INVENTION — MECHANISM, AND PROGRESS OF LANGUAGE—PRONUNCIATION, INFLEXION, GESTURE, AND STYLE—DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE ANCIENT AND MODERN LANGUAGES—ITS PRESENT CHARACTER.

The term language signifies the expression of our ideas by certain articulate sounds, which are used as signs of

those ideas; by articulate sounds are meant those modulations of the voice formed by the mouth and its organs. This method of communicating thought has long been carried to perfection; language has become a vehicle by which the most delicate and refined emotions of one mind can be transmitted to another; in this state it existed among the ancient Greeks and Romans: at length it has become so familiar, that we view it without surprise.

Philosophical inquiries into the subject of language, like those into the organization of the human mind, have for their chief and ultimate object, the exposition of its more complex phenomena: it is necessary, however, that the simple should be premised, because they are the elements of which the complex are formed; a distinct knowledge of the elements being indispensable to an accurate conception of the aggregate, which is compounded of them. In the mind of man, thought succeeds thought, idea follows idea incessantly; and the original sources from which these flow are senses:¹ it is from them that we derive all our notions of what we denominate the external world, and to their perception we apply the term sensation.² The sensations, however, which we have through the medium of the senses, exist only during the presence of the object, and cease upon its absence; but it is a known part of our constitution, that when our sensations cease, by the absence of their objects, something remains; for instance, after I have seen a friend, and on his taking leave see him no longer, I have still the consequence of the sensation; it is a copy, an image,

¹ Smell, sight, hearing, taste, and touch.

² Anatomy teaches us that the senses are formed by the nerves, which proceed directly from the brain; that they constitute the organs of sensation, and convey impressions made upon them to the mind; they are therefore very properly named according to their functions; the first pair being called the olfactory, the second pair the optic, and so forth.

a reflection, and is called an idea, both a correct and a convenient name, as it expresses no theory whatever, only the bare fact, which is indisputable.

The term sensation has a double meaning; it signifies not only an individual sensation, as when I say, 'I smell this flower,' or 'I see my hand;' but it also signifies the general faculty of sensation, that is the complex notion of all the phenomena, or varieties of sensation together, as a part of our nature. The word idea has only the meaning which corresponds to the first of these significations; it denotes an individual idea, and we have not as yet a name for that compound notion, which embraces as one whole all the different parts to which the term idea relates: as we say sensation, we should also say ideation, it would be a very useful word, as sensation in that case would be the general name for one part of our constitution, ideation for another. Thus we find, that firstly, we have sensations; secondly, ideas, the copies of those sensations; thirdly, ideas, sometimes simple, sometimes complex, so combined as not to appear several ideas, but as one idea; and fourthly, trains of those ideas, or one succeeding another without end, so that during the whole course of our lives, a series of these two states of consciousness, sensation and ideation, is constantly going on. These are simple facts of our nature, attested by observation¹ and experience, important so far as they extend, but left immeasurably behind in the rapid march of modern science, which has opened to our view the book of nature, and actually analyzed the breath of our nostrils, showing it to be hydrogen and carbon sustained by caloric; and proving, by a course of beautiful experiments, that the calcination of metals, the combustion of flame, and the respiration of animal life, are all perfectly analogous to each other,² and conducted on the same principles.

¹ Mill on the Analysis of the Human Mind.

² See the chemical works of Priestley, Lavoisier, and Thomson.

The sensations, and more particularly the ideas of men, are hidden from each other, unless they have recourse to some expedient by which they can be made known; they are compelled therefore to use signs of their inward feelings, by which a knowledge of them may be communicated to one another. The flexibility of the human voice presented such obvious advantages, that articulate sounds have been used among all the varieties of our species, as the principal medium; and the excellence of language has proved to be the greatest advantage which man possesses over the inferior animals, as it is the foundation not only of his happiness in society, but likewise of all his acquired advantages. The power of language essentially consists in two things; firstly, in having marks for our sensations and ideas; secondly, in so arranging them, that they may correctly denote a train of those states and feelings. It is evident, that if we convey to others the ideas which arise in our own minds, and also convey them in the order in which they arise, the business of communication is completed, and if we establish the means of reviving the ideas which we formerly had, and of reviving them in the order in which we formerly had them, the business of recollection is also completed. According to this view and explanation, spoken language is the use of the immediate marks of the ideas; written language, which will be considered in the following chapter, is the use of the secondary and permanent marks of the ideas; or, as Aristotle justly observes, "words are the marks of thoughts, and letters of words;" the written characters being the signs of audible marks, the audible marks signs of the ideas: in short, from sensation ideas are produced, and from ideas language is brought forth.

If, for the sake of philosophical consideration, we presume language to be of human invention, and carry our thoughts back to its first dawn among mankind, reflecting upon the feeble beginnings from which it would originally arise, and

the numerous obstacles it would encounter in its progress, remembering that men were a wandering scattered race, with little society among them, except that of families, it is not easy to conceive how any one set of sounds, or words, could be agreed on as the signs of their ideas ; while it is difficult to imagine how society could form itself previously to language, or how words could rise into language previously to society being formed. The learned and ingenious author of *Hermes*, with much ability, endeavours to show that language is founded in compact ; and Lord Monboddo supports him in this view, insisting that it is acquired by society and reflection : in their behalf they bring forward the opinions of ancient and modern writers of much talent. The late Dugald Stewart, a high authority, advocated the hypothesis, that the formation of language is an effort within the scope of the faculties which man has received from his Creator. To get rid of the extreme difficulties with which the above opinions were surrounded, great authors, both among the ancients and the moderns, have fallen back upon nearly the same point ; the former ascribing the gift of language to the gods, the latter to the divine care of Providence.

The Mosaic dispensation, in which we have an account of the formation and first occupations of man, represents him as being immediately capable of conversing with his Maker, of giving names to the various animals,¹ and of reasoning on the situation in which he was placed ; and it is rational to conclude, that his Creator who made and endowed him with mental and corporeal powers suited to his condition, gifted him not only with the faculty of speech but with language itself, which latter appears to have been as necessary to his comfort and happiness as any other attribute bestowed upon him. What the first language was, is useless to

¹ Genesis chap. ii. ver. 19. and chap. iii. ver. 10.

inquire, for it is impossible to arrive at any satisfactory information on the subject; some think it must have been the Chinese, because it is principally composed of monosyllables forming very simple sounds, which they imagine would be the character of the original language; some contend for the Hebrew, as it is found in our Bible; others, for the Chaldee, like that spoken by the father-in-law of Jacob; others give the honour to the Arabic; but Goropius and Verstigan seem fully persuaded it was the Teutonic, or ancient German. Such conjectures can answer no useful purpose, are endless, and uncertain. Probably the most rational opinion on this intricate subject may be, that when man was created, Providence gifted him with at least the elements of speech, or all that was necessary for him in an infant state of society, leaving him to improve language, like other arts, in the progress of time and of civilization, according to the wants of a more enlarged state of society. Besides, reasoning from analogy, with the corroborative evidence of history, we know that the elements of speech in rude states are poor and narrow; that the ancient Greeks and Romans gradually enlarged and perfected their languages as civilization advanced among them, although principally by the assistance of letters, which has been the course pursued by ourselves, and other modern nations. It was in former times not an unusual imagination, that there was a certain language original and natural to man; and that if men were not taught another language by example, they would speak this language: experience however, after trial had been made by several curious persons, showed this imagination to be vain; for those who were brought up without any communication with their species were always dumb, with the exception of sometimes imitating the natural sounds of whatever beasts or birds they occasionally heard. We are now at liberty to inquire in what manner, or by what steps language advanced to the state of perfection in which we now find it.

If we suppose a period when an enlarged communication became necessary, and names began to be assigned to many different objects—in what manner can we suppose men to have proceeded in this assignation of names, or invention of words?—undoubtedly, by imitating as much as they could, the nature of the object which they named, in the sound of the name which they gave to it; in the same manner as a painter, who would represent grass, must employ a green colour; so, in the process of language, one giving a name to any thing harsh or boisterous, would of course employ a harsh or boisterous sound. To suppose words invented, or names given to things in a manner purely arbitrary, without any ground or reason, is to suppose an effect without a cause; on the contrary, nothing was more natural than to imitate, by the sound of the voice, the quality of the sound or noise which any external object made, and to form its name accordingly. Thus, in all languages, we find a multitude of words evidently constructed upon this principle: a certain bird is termed a cuckoo, from the sound which it emits; another is called the humming-bird, for the same reason; when one sort of wind is said to whistle, and another to roar; when a serpent is said to hiss, a fly to buz, and falling timber to crash; when a stream is said to murmur, and hail to rattle; the analogy between the words and the things signified, is plainly discernible. The names of objects in primitive languages, are not only descriptive, but often highly poetical. In Sanscrit, the name given to a frog, signifies literally, the leaper; to a bee, the flower-drinker; to a bird, the frequenter of the sky; to a serpent, the mover on his breast; to rice, tuft-growing; to a cloud, the water-giver, and so on. In terms appropriated to moral ideas, learned men have been of opinion, that in every language, words significant of them are derived from the names of sensible objects, to which they are conceived analagous; and by this natural mechanism, they imagine languages to have at length become copious. The correctness of this

opinion appears to be established in the next stage of language, called a figurative manner of speech.

It has been, and is still common to call a figurative style the oriental, from the supposition that it was peculiar to the nations of the East; whereas, from that of the American and others, it plainly appears to have been common to all nations, in certain periods of their society and language. This statement is confirmed by undoubted facts: the style of all languages among states in their first and rude eras is found to be full of figures, and picturesque in a high degree. The nations of Canada carried on their treaties and public transactions with great pomp of style and boldness of metaphor: they dug up the hatchet on going to war; they buried it, and brightened the chain when they confirmed a peace. Another remarkable instance is that of the Old Testament, which is carried on, like all other languages, when advanced only to a certain state, by constant allusion to sensible objects; iniquity being expressed by a spotted garment; misery, by drinking the cup of astonishment; vain pursuits, by feeding on ashes; and the like, in numerous instances. We are apt, upon a superficial view, to suppose that such modes of expression are among the refinements of speech, not invented till language had advanced to its later periods, and then that they were devised by orators and rhetoricians. This is one of those conjectures founded on ignorance, the fact being directly contrary. Mankind never employed so many figures of speech, as when they had few words in which to express themselves; it was the want of proper names for every object, and the greater facility of borrowing from analogy, than inventing new terms, that obliged them to use one name for many; and as a matter following of course, to express themselves by comparisons, metaphors, allusions, and all those substituted forms of speech which render language figurative; whilst it was perfectly natural, from the mechanism of lan-

guage itself, that in phrases on the disposition of the mind, and on moral and intellectual ideas, they should at first be drawn or expressed by comparisons with the sensible and material objects around them. In the present day, when language has arrived at a high degree of perfection, and become so copious, a strongly figurative style would be looked upon as bombastic and absurd. Thus, although our modern languages may be considered as less animated than those of the ancients, they are far more chaste and elegant. We may now consider the pronunciation and style of language, depending upon the inflexion of the voice, gesture, &c. Inflexions of the voice are so natural, that to some nations it has appeared easier to express different ideas, by varying the tone with which they pronounced the same word, than to contrive words for all their ideas. This is particularly the case with the Chinese. The number of words in their language, which is doubtless one of high antiquity, is stated not to be very numerous;¹ but in speaking, they vary each word on five different tones; and, although this gives a great appearance of singing to their speech, the same word is made to represent five different things. In the Greek and Latin languages, this musical pronunciation was also retained to a considerable extent; they not only spoke with stronger inflexions of the voice than we use, but the quantity of their syllables was much more fixed than in the modern languages, and rendered more sensible to the ear in speaking; accents were also placed upon their syllables, the acute, grave, and circumflex, which determined the rising or falling of the voice: the declamations of their orators, and the pronunciation of their actors upon the stage, approached somewhat to the nature of a recitative in music,² were capable of being marked in notes, and supported with instruments; hence

¹ The primitives are said to be only 328.

² The Italian opera at the present day is not an inapt illustration.

Aristotle, in his poetics, considers the music of tragedy as one of its essential parts.

Action, or gesture, is treated of by the ancient critics, as one of the chief qualities in every public speaker; it was carried to a much greater height both among the Greeks and Romans than we are accustomed to in modern times. Roscius to us would have seemed a madman. We learn from Cicero, that it was a contest between him and that talented actor, whether he could express a sentiment in a greater number of phrases, or Roscius in a greater number of intelligible and significant gestures. At length, gesture came to engross the stage wholly, under the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius; the favourite entertainment of the public was the pantomime, which was carried on entirely by mute gesticulation; the people were moved, and wept at it, as at tragedies; and the passion for it became so strong, that laws were made to restrain the senators from studying the art. In the present day, our sober, or what the ancients would call monotonous way of speaking, expresses the passions and feelings with sufficient energy to move us, who are not accustomed to a very vehement style of language.

On investigating language, and carefully tracing its rise and progress, we find, that while improving by copiousness and refinement, it has also become much simplified. Thus, the Greek, Hebrew, Chaldee, Arabic, and most of the oriental languages,¹ have a passive form of the verb, a dual form, and inflected cases of the noun. The Latin, which was partly founded on the Greek, retained the passive verb, but rejected the dual form. The Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and French, derived from the Latin, rejected both the passive form of the verb, and the inflected cases of the noun. The remaining steps of simplification

¹ The number of languages and dialects, ancient and modern, has been computed by Adelung of Germany, to be 3064.

were to substitute the natural distinctions of gender for those previously in use, which being formed on arbitrary principles, depended chiefly on the termination ; and to do away with the necessity of making the adjective agree with the noun in gender and number ; these improvements were effected by the English¹ language, which has now become so powerful, copious, and polished, that it bids fair from our vast colonial possessions to become universal.²

The author has now endeavoured to show the progress of language in its material points ; it appears that it was originally not copious in words, but descriptive by the sound, and expressive in the manner of uttering them ; by the aid of significant tones and gestures, a figurative and poetical

¹ There is one defect in the English language, the indecisive state of its orthography, arising partly from the diffidence of grammarians in attempting any change, and partly from the want of an authoritative academy to lay down a fixed rule on the subject. The irregularities in the adaptation of spelling to pronunciation, and the constant shifting of sound without any apparent reason, render the language difficult to foreigners.

² A dialect is now in process of formation in the West Indies, which has attracted the attention of philologists, as it develops the principle upon which the languages at present existing are supposed to have been formed ; it is called the *Talkee-talkee*, or Negro dialect : its basis is the modern English, with which it unites many Dutch, Spanish, and Portuguese words. When a Negro attempts to speak English, he finds a difficulty in pronouncing the sound *th*, and substitutes *d* ; he introduces vowels even where they do not properly occur, and softens the language by omitting the harsh consonants, usually substituting liquid ones ; for instance, *drie* is *three* in *Talkee-talkee*, *dem* is *them*, *bakka* is *back*, *holi* is *hold*, *wilni* is *wine*, *morro* is *more*. The language contains so much English, that our countrymen can generally understand it. A version of the Scriptures in this language has been issued by the Bible Society. Time will show what place the *Talkee-talkee* is destined to hold in the scale of languages.

style: it has at length proceeded from sterility to copiousness, from vivacity to accuracy, from a complex state to a simple one. Language, in its ancient state, may be considered more favourable to poetry and oratory ; in its present, to reason and philosophy.

CHAPTER III.

ON WRITING.

WRITING, ITS USEFULNESS — PICTURE-WRITING — HIEROGLYPHICS—ALLEGORICAL SYMBOLS—ALPHABET OF SYLLABLES — ALPHABET OF LETTERS — NUMBER OF ELEMENTARY MARKS FOR SOUNDS REQUISITE TO FORM A WRITTEN LANGUAGE, AND BY WHICH IDEAS WERE CONVEYED TO THE UNDERSTANDING THROUGH THE EYE—ORTHOGRAPHY—WRITING, WHERE AND WHEN INVENTED — MODES OF WRITING—MODERN DISCOVERIES—MATERIALS IN USE—COMPARISON BETWEEN SPOKEN AND WRITTEN LANGUAGE.

Writing is after language, the most useful art which men possess. To whom we are indebted for this sublime and refined discovery, does not clearly appear ; concealed by the darkness of remote antiquity, the great inventor is deprived of those honours which would still be paid to his memory, by all who love knowledge and learning. The first essays of this art, which has probably contributed more than any other to the improvement of our species, were extremely rude ; and like language, it advanced towards perfection slowly, and by gradual progression. By writing, we understand certain marks or characters presented to the eye, enabling individuals when absent to hold communication with each other ; it is an improvement on speech, and must have been posterior to it in the order of time. At first men thought of nothing further than making known their thoughts to each other when present, by means of sounds or words ;

afterwards they devised writing. Written characters are of two kinds; they are either signs for things, or signs for words; belonging to the former, are the pictures, hieroglyphics, and symbols, employed by the ancient nations; to the latter, are the alphabetical characters now in use: these two sorts of writing are essentially distinct.

Pictures were undoubtedly the first essay towards writing. Imitation is so natural to man, that in all ages, and among all nations, some plans have been attempted, however poor and rude, of endeavouring to copy, or trace the likeness of sensible objects. When the warrior, eager for fame, wished to transmit a knowledge of his exploits to succeeding ages; or when the gratitude of a people to their sovereign prompted them to hand down to posterity an account of his beneficent deeds, the first method of accomplishing it that seems to have occurred to them, was to delineate in the best manner they could, figures representing the action of which they were solicitous to preserve the memory. This which has properly been called picture-writing, was in use among the Americans, when that country was discovered; for when the Spaniards visited South America under Cortes, A. D. 1519, the painters in the train of Montezuma's ambassadors, conveyed the intelligence to him by delineating or drawing, on white cotton cloth, their ships, horses, artillery, and arms. Compared with the awkward attempts of their savage countrymen, the paintings of the Mexicans may be considered as works of composition and design; it cannot be said, however, that this people were acquainted with any other method of recording transactions, than that of delineating the objects which they wished to represent; but they could exhibit a more complex series of events in progressive order, describing by a proper disposition of figures, the occurrences of a king's reign, from his accession to his decease. The style of all their paintings was the same, representing things, not words; exhibiting images to

the eye, not ideas to the understanding. The defects in the mode of recording transactions by picture-writing, must have been deeply felt; to paint every occurrence was, from its nature, a very tedious operation; and as events multiplied, its annals must have swelled to an enormous bulk. The necessity of improving it would have sharpened invention, and the human mind holding the same course in the new world as in the old, might in time have advanced by the same successive steps; firstly, from an actual picture to the plain hieroglyphic; secondly, to the allegorical symbol; thirdly, to the arbitrary character for syllables; and lastly, until an alphabet of letters were invented, then formed, capable of expressing all the various combinations of sound, or words employed in speech. It appears that the Mexicans, when their country was discovered, were making some rude attempts at the hieroglyphic character; but the short duration of their empire prevented them from advancing further in that long course which conducts men from the labour of painting objects, to the ease and simplicity of alphabetical writing. For when Cortes invaded the country, Montezuma was only the ninth monarch in succession, who had swayed the Mexican sceptre; and Mexico, from the best accounts handed down to us, does not appear to have been founded more than two hundred and seventy years before the Spaniards invaded it.

To supply in some measure the defect, the tediousness, and insufficiency of picture-writing, the ancient Chaldeans, or Egyptians, invented the hieroglyphic characters upwards of two thousand years before the Christian era, forming the second stage of the art of writing. They were first made to stand for visible, but shortly afterwards in the third stage for invisible objects. The Mexicans who had made some slight advances to these characters, represented a conquered town by a rude delineation of a house; a target ornamented with darts, described a monarch who had

enlarged his dominions by force of arms: Egypt however was the country where the above sort of writing was most studied, and brought to a regular art. The great distinction between picture-writing, hieroglyphics, and allegorical symbols is, that pictures delineated the resemblance of external visible objects; hieroglyphics painted invisible objects by analogies taken from the external world, in the same manner as that which is called the oriental, or figurative style of language, naturally employed sensible objects to represent moral and intellectual ideas and feelings. Thus an eye, was the hieroglyphic symbol for knowledge; a circle, of eternity; ingratitude, was denominated by a viper; imprudence, by a fly; wisdom, by an ant; victory, by a hawk; a dutiful child, by a stork; a man universally shunned, by an eel. Sometimes two or more of these characters were joined together, such as a serpent with a hawk's head, to denote nature with God presiding over it.

It has been supposed that hieroglyphics were the invention of the Egyptian priests, in order to conceal their learning from the public view, and that they were preferred by them to the alphabetical mode of writing. This is certainly a mistake; at first they were used from necessity, not from choice, although afterwards retained by the priesthood as a sacred kind of writing. It is stated by Clemens Alexandrinus, that those who were educated among the Egyptians learned, firstly, the Demotic,¹ or common character, called also the Epistolographic; secondly, the Hieratic,² which the sacred scribes employed; and lastly, the hieroglyphic,³ of which there were two kinds; the one denoting objects in a direct manner, the other symbolical. The correctness of this


¹ From *δημοτικός* (*demotikos*) "of the people."

² From *ιερός* (*hieros*) "sacred" or "holy," consisting of the rude outline of images; some of the manuscripts found on the mummies are of this kind of writing.

³ From *ιερός* (*hieros*) "sacred," and *γλυφω* (*glyphō*) "I carve."

statement has been amply borne out in modern days. The French, while digging a fort at Rosetta, found an irregular block of basalt, which had on one side three inscriptions; the first in hieroglyphics, the second in the Demotic character, and the third in Greek. The latter inscription concluded with the information, that the decree it contained was to be engraven in three different characters; profiting by this information, M. Champollion succeeded by means of the Greek, in decyphering the other inscriptions; and after devoting many years to the investigation of the symbolical characters, he informs us that those in use were limited to 864, which he has arranged in various classes. Other documents recently discovered have thrown further light upon the meaning of Egyptian writings.

Writing continued to advance, from symbols of things invisible to simple arbitrary marks, which stood for objects, though without any resemblance or analogy to the objects signified. The Peruvians were found to practise this method, by the use of small cords of different colours, termed *quipos*; by knots upon them of various sizes and differently arranged, they contrived to give information, and communicate their thoughts to each other. The written characters in use among the Chinese at the present day are also of this nature; they have no alphabet of letters composing their words, but every single character which they use in writing is significant of an idea; it is a mark which stands for a thing, or object; consequently, the number is immense, corresponding to the whole range of ideas which they have occasion to express. In fact the signs are far greater than the number of words; for it was mentioned before, that by varying a word on five different tones, the Chinese made it signify five different things. They are said to have upwards of 70,000 characters; to read and write them to perfection is the study of a whole life, and accounts for the trifling progress which this nation has made in the superior



branches of science. Attached to old habits, or repelled from imitation by the indifference, or contempt for improvement which frequently attaches to ignorance, the people of that vast empire refuse to adopt the grammatical advantages of Europe, which would lead them to analyze their speech into its alphabetical elements. They were greatly surprised however to find, that when the Jesuits from Europe came among them, they were soon able to write their language by our alphabet; and as they use the same word in different tones for different meanings, these fathers found a way of making the proper distinction in writing by various marks and accents placed over the words. The Chinese characters are also in use among the Japanese, Tonquinese, and Coreans, who speak different languages from one another, and from the inhabitants of China; a plain proof that like hieroglyphics, they are signs for things, not for words. We have still instances of this kind of writing among ourselves; our arithmetical figures, 1, 2, 3, &c., which we derived from the Arabians,¹ these have no dependence on words, but each figure denotes an object, the number for which it stands. Accordingly on being presented to the eye, it is equally well understood by all nations who have agreed in the use of these marks, however different the names in their languages may be. And a more complete illustration is exhibited in the symbols used in heraldry.

The next step in the progress of writing, was the invention of an alphabet of syllables, said to be retained to this day in Ethiopia, and some countries of India. By fixing upon a particular mark or character for every syllable in a language, the number necessary to be used in writing was reduced within a much smaller compass than the number of words; still the characters being numerous must have continued to render reading and writing very laborious arts. Till at length some happy genius arose,

¹ Who received them from India, about A. D. 900.

and tracing the sounds made by the human voice to their most simple elements, reduced them to a few vowels and consonants, and affixing to each the signs we now call letters, taught mankind by their combinations to put in writing all the different words, or variations of sound, employed in speech; being reduced to this simplicity, the art of writing has been brought to the state of perfection in which we now find it.

The learned author of *Hermes* before quoted, informs us,¹ that to about twenty plain elementary sounds we owe that variety of articulate voices, which have been sufficient to explain the sentiments of so innumerable a multitude, as all the present and past generations of mankind: as there are but a small number of marks for sounds, called notes in music, so there are but a small number of distinct articulate sounds in every language; in different languages however their numbers vary; and there are not many sounds in any two languages exactly alike, although by the great intercourse between the different European nations they are gradually assimilating. According to Mr. Sheridan,² the number of simple sounds in our tongue is twenty-eight; but Dr. Kenrick³ says that we have only eleven distinct species of articulate sounds, which even by contraction, prolongation, and composition, are not increased beyond sixteen; every syllable or articulate sound in our language being one of that number. Among the Greeks and Romans, their written alphabets are said to have accorded to the several distinct sounds and modes of articulation, so that each sound had its distinct mark by which it was uniformly represented: now we know that the original Hebrew, and old Latin alphabets, had only fifteen let-

¹ Book iii. chap. ii. p. 324.

² Sheridan's *Rhetorical Grammar*, prefixed to his dictionary, London, 1780.

³ Kenrick's *Rhetorical Grammar*.

ters, and the Greek sixteen; that although the Greek language, which is one of the most beautiful and copious of antiquity, when arrived at a high degree of refinement, numbered twenty-four letters in its alphabet; yet four¹ of them are double letters. Of the authorities just mentioned, the author of *Hermes* appears to be the most correct, about twenty elementary sounds forming the actual number. Ten characters have been found perfectly sufficient for all the purposes of numerical calculations extending to infinity, and seven notes comprise the whole of music; these by their different arrangements produce that variety of harmony which we so justly admire.

It is evident from the confined nature of the organs in man, that the simple natural sounds to be distinct must be few; and though artifice, or affectation, may invent a greater variety, they will be deficient in precision, as they increase in number. Tacquet, an able mathematician, informs us,² that the various combinations of twenty-four letters, without any repetition, will amount to

620448401733239439360000,

which it is evident will admit of an infinity of arrangements, sufficient to represent not only all the conceptions of the mind, but all words in all languages whatever. The transferring of ideas by means of marks, or letters, from the ear to the eye, was certainly a very extraordinary exertion of the human mind; even supposing that the analysis of the sounds of language had already been made, and granting that symbols were in general use, well may we exclaim with the poet—

“ Whence did the wondrous mystic art arise,
Of painting speech, and speaking to the eyes?
That we by tracing magic lines are taught
How to embody, and to colour thought.”

Θ (*Theta*) Φ (*Phi*) Χ (*Chi*) Ψ (*Psi*)

¹ Tacquet's *Arithmetical Theory*, p. 517. Edit. Amst. 1704.

If the notation of music¹ had been invented before letters, which might have happened, the discovery would have been as great as that of letters. As there are more sounds in some languages than in others, it follows of course that the number of characters will vary in the different alphabets. Thus the Hebrew and Syriac have twenty-two, the Greek has twenty-four, the Latin twenty-five, our own twenty-six, the Arabic twenty-eight, the Sanscrit fifty, the Egyptian or Coptic, and Persic have thirty-two. The manliness or effeminacy, the harmony or harshness of a written language will in a great measure depend upon the proper or improper junction of letters in syllables; the orthography of all languages in their infant state is imperfect, and remains so until a language has been reduced into grammatical rules, and polished by the rejection of superfluous letters; our own language is very different in the present day to what it was two hundred years back.

It has been already remarked, that the individual to whom we are indebted for the invaluable discovery of those signs called letters, is not known with certainty; various writers have attributed their invention to different nations; some give the merit to the Egyptians, who appear to have a much better claim than any other people; some ascribe them to the Phœnicians: a variety of opinions only serves to show the uncertainty of the subject; for to conjecture, where direct evidence is wanting, there can be no limits. Memnon the Egyptian is stated to have been the inventor, about 1820 years before the Christian era, and Plato in *Phædo*, expressly gives the honour of the invention to an Egyptian. Unfortunately however, in the long lapse of ages, the destruction of records, and the wreck of literature, we have nothing certain on this point. The Coptic, said to be the ancient Egyptian language, was so entirely lost, that little more than the name of it was known, until the late M. de

¹ The gamut was invented by Guy l'Aretin, A. D. 1025.

la Crose composed a Coptic grammar and dictionary; the alphabet has thirty-two letters, but the characters are almost entirely Greek. The impression upon the mind of the author is, that the credit of the invention of alphabetical writing is due to the Egyptians; that Moses having been carefully educated in their learning, naturally imparted the knowledge he had received to his countrymen the Jews, about the period when Cadmus brought across the Mediterranean into Europe from Phœnicia the first sixteen letters of the Greek alphabet.

It is curious to observe, that the letters which we use at this day can be traced back to the alphabet of Cadmus; the Roman alphabet which remains with us is plainly founded on the Greek; and it has been remarked by learned men, that the Greek characters, according to the manner in which they are formed in the oldest inscriptions, have a remarkable conformity to the Samaritan, or ancient Hebrew; and by inverting them from right to left, as in the Phœnician, they are all three nearly the same: the names, or denominations of the letters Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta, in the Greek; and Aleph, Beth, Gimel, Daleth, in the Hebrew; with the order in which they are arranged in the several alphabets, Phœnician, Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, amount to a demonstration, that they were all originally derived from one and the same source; they suppose that an invention so valuable and easily copied would be greedily received, and propagated with speed and facility through different nations; this opinion strikes the author as not an unreasonable one, more particularly when it is remembered that the Egyptians, Phœnicians, Hebrews, and Syrians, were all neighbouring countries bordering upon each other. The letters were originally written from the right hand towards the left; afterwards the Greeks adopted a new method, writing their lines alternately from right to left, and from left to right, which was called *Boustrophedon*, as it resembled the

way in which oxen plough the ground ; this was the method in the time of Solon ; at length the motion from left to right being considered the most commodious, the practice of it has prevailed throughout all the countries of Europe.

A written language was devised some time back for the blind—the alphabet consists of embossed letters ; here the sense of touch is called in to compensate for the loss of sight, the idea is conveyed almost instantaneously from the written character to the mind by the medium of the hand, securing a vast accession of pleasure and instruction to this afflicted portion of our race. Another kind of writing used in England is called stenography, or short-hand ; it lessens the labour of writing by substituting more quickly formed characters for those in general use. A third kind is called phonography, or writing by sound, that is, writing each word exactly as it is pronounced ; it does away with the tedious method of spelling, for it has distinct signs for all the sounds of the human voice, and is applicable to all languages ; nothing has yet been invented which comes so near to a universal character. The invention of printing, which took place about the middle of the fifteenth century, may be said to form a new era in the history of language and of man ; it is impossible to estimate the effects of this invention in the diffusion of knowledge, and in the development of the human mind.

Writing was for ages a kind of engraving, the most ancient materials were pillars and obeliaks ; on tables of stone were written the ten commandments, and the blessings and cursings inculcated in the laws of Moses ;¹ then followed plates of brass and wooden tablets ; in proportion as writing became common, lighter and more portable substances were employed, such as the inner bark, and leaves of trees. About the time of Alexander the Great, paper first began to be manufactured from the Egyptian plant,

¹ Deuteronomy, chap. xvii.

or reed, called the papyrus; the use of parchment, or the art of preparing skins for writing, was not discovered till the time of Eumenes, king of Pergamus, 192 years before the christian era, hence called Pergamena, *charta vel membrana*.¹ Most of the ancient manuscripts which remain are written on parchment, few on papyrus. The Romans in the later times of the Republic wrote in common on tablets of wood and ivory, covered with a thin coat of wax with a stylus, or pen of iron; and on papyrus with a small reed, cut and made in the same manner as our pens in the present day. Quills were first used in writing 635 years after the Christian era. When Egypt fell under the dominion of the Arabs in the seventh century, the manufacture of paper from the papyrus ceased. The art of making paper from silk, or cotton, was invented in the East about the beginning of the tenth century, and in imitation of it from linen rags in the fourteenth century. Coarse brown paper was first manufactured in England at Dartford, in Kent, A.D. 1588.

Language and writing may correctly be called the foundations of science, learning, and improvement. The author will now close this chapter by a comparison between spoken and written language. The advantages of writing over speech are, that writing is a more extensive and permanent method of communication; more extensive, as it is not confined within the narrow circle of those who hear our words; for by means of written characters we can send our thoughts abroad, and speak in the most distant regions of the world. In the words of the poet, we may

“Speed the soft intercourse from soul to soul,
And waft a sigh from Indus to the Pole.”

Writing is also more permanent as it prolongs this voice to distant ages, giving us the means of recording our sentiments

¹ The skins of calves are called vellum.

tian era:¹ the late Rev. and learned Dr. Hales² places it, however, at 5411 anterior to the coming of our Saviour. All the systems of chronology vary on this subject; and as upwards of three hundred different opinions³ have already been expressed regarding the time of the creation, it appears in every point of view to be involved in much obscurity. The ancients considered it impious to attempt to fix the era of the creation; the moderns consider it almost impious to doubt it. Both of these opinions have their origin in the same sources, prejudice and ignorance; for when we turn to sacred revelation, we find that it does not fix the period; it simply tells us, that "in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."⁴

From the beginning of the world till ages after the deluge, we are destitute even of a shadow of proof to inform us what was the first, or original language spoken by mankind; all the languages with which we are acquainted, bearing the marks of being derived from a more primitive speech. Until we arrive at the period of the oriental languages, we are completely in the dark, and have nothing on this subject which is to be relied upon; and if we turn to sacred revelation, it says, "that the whole earth was of one language and of one speech;"⁵ but of what language, or of what speech is left to conjecture. Unfortunately the most ancient records are scanty and fabulous; the first steps by which nations advanced towards maturity are generally unknown;

¹ The year A. D. 1843, according to Usher and

Blair, is the year of the world - 5847

According to Scaliger - - - 5792 difference 55

- Julian period - - - 6556 .. 709

- Josephus - - - 7245 .. 1398

- Modern Greek Calendar 7351 .. 1504

² Hales' Analysis of Chronology, &c.

³ Kennedy's Scriptural Chronology.

⁴ Genesis, chap. i. verse 1.

⁵ Genesis, chap. xi. verse 1.

and of some of the greatest natural commotions which ever agitated the terrestrial globe, little can now be discovered but their remaining effects. This want of materials contracts the reward of the enquirer, but rather increases than diminishes his labour. If the history of universal nature were extant, persevering industry might reduce it to a compendium: but to discover clearly the facts, which are concealed by the veil of allegorical fiction, to supply by happy conjecture the want of authentic evidence, and to unite the scattered fragments of truth which might thus be brought to light, so as to form them into one perfect and harmonious system, is a task which must prove too arduous for the most transcendent human abilities. Enough may however still be collected, which has escaped the ravages of time, to produce a rich supply of instruction; we must, to the various difficulties which we have to encounter, oppose the best precautions in our power, by contenting ourselves within the limits of real knowledge, rather choosing to confess our ignorance, than to grant to mere opinions the authority of facts.

The first accounts having claims to probability of the language and literature of mankind, begin a considerable period subsequent to the dispersion, or migration from the plains of Shinar; when men after the deluge had become multiplied, great changes were effected, and colonies went forth from time to time to people the various parts of the world. We are informed in sacred history,¹ that confusion of speech was originally caused by a miracle, to stop the foolish project of men in their attempt to build a tower whose top they imagined might reach to heaven. The miracle here consisted in the confusion of speech being immediate, to stop the progress of the building; for difference of language is a natural consequence of extensive migration, particularly among rude states; and we find in the present

¹ Genesis, chap. xi. verse 7.

day, considerable varieties of speech in the different provinces of the same country. Until a people possess the advantages of writing and literature, their language is not found either to remain stationary, or to advance to any degree of perfection; our own language, both in its orthography and pronunciation, is very different from what it was only two centuries and a half ago. Ancient history informs us, that Noah, about the 1986th year after the creation, divided the world between his three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japhet: that Shem, had nearly all Asia; Ham, the large continent of Africa; and Japhet, Europe, with some provinces of Asia Minor. Of the new world, or the immense continent of North and South America, larger than either Europe, Asia, or Africa, and not much inferior to a third part of the habitable globe, discovered by Columbus A. D. 1492, and 3510 years after the above division, we are utterly unacquainted, either how it was divided or peopled, sacred and profane history being silent on the subject. When the nations of Europe unexpectedly discovered a new world, which they did not conceive to exist, removed at a great distance from every part of the ancient continents then known, filled with inhabitants, whose appearance and manners differed remarkably from the rest of the human species, the question of their origin naturally became an object of curiosity and attention. The theories and speculations of ingenious men on this subject would fill many volumes, but were often so wild and chimerical, that it would be a waste of time to enumerate them. Such regions of conjecture and controversy belong not to the historian; his being a more limited province, confined to what is established by certain, or at least highly probable evidence. On the subject of America, until it were discovered, how, or in what manner, or by whom, it was originally peopled, we are entirely ignorant. To return to the ancient world. After Noah had divided it between his three sons, as above-mentioned, the children of Chus, the

son of Ham, would not submit to such division; for Nimrod, who first took upon himself the regal or kingly dignity,¹ drove Ashur, one of the sons of Shem, from his territories, and forced him to take refuge in the higher parts of Mesopotamia. These dominions they held for a considerable time, but were at length attacked, and driven by the united efforts of the sons of Shem from the plains of Chaldea and Babylon, from whence they were dispersed among various nations.

Establishment of the Oriental Nations.—The Chaldeans, Egyptians, Phœnicians, Jews, Syrians, and Arabians.

The Egyptians considered themselves the first of nations, but it is asserted that the Chaldeans have a prior claim. Of the Chaldean history much has been said, but little is known, and even that is obscured by fable. The accounts handed down to us by Abydenus, Apollodorus, and Alexander Polyhistor, who received them from Berosus, a native of Babylonia and a priest of Belus, who lived in the time of Alexander the Great, are subject to the same defect; although Berosus was held by the Persians in esteem, and is frequently quoted by the oriental fathers, as well as by Josephus, the Jewish historian. Babel, or Babylonia, is said to have been originally founded by Nimrod, in the year of the world 1771, and only 115 years after the flood. Callisthenes the philosopher, who was in Alexander's retinue when he entered Babylon, wrote to his friend Aristotle, that the Babylonians reckoned themselves to be at least of 1903 years standing; and Porphyry informs us, that when Babylon was taken by Alexander, there were brought from thence celestial observations for the space of the above number of years; so that, if these statements can be depended upon, the antiquity of Chaldea is not exaggerated. Astronomy such as it was, confused

¹ According to Hales, 2554 B. C.

and obscure, seems to have been the favourite study of the Chaldeans; they were descended from Ham, who was held by them in veneration. This people are said to have become the first apostates from the truth, by introducing the adoration of the sun amongst mankind, which continued for ages, the first idolatrous worship after the flood. Natural religion, however, in all countries has been pretty much the same. The sun¹ was usually the first deity; remote, inscrutable, covered with light as with a veil, appearing to sweep through the heavens majestic and alone, exercising a daily and indisputable power over the lower world, the wanderers of the earth, before the light of revelation arose, saw in him the visible Deity of the universe. Then the moon "walking in brightness," the queen of the sea, whose tides rose or retired by her influence; with the trooping stars, resembling her in form, but inferior in magnitude and power, all in turn became objects of adoration. The comets were looked upon as evil influences, rushing in amidst the order of the sky, and their appearance was believed to portend war and disaster. Finding every where modifications of the same primitive religion, the learned with useless ingenuity, have attempted to trace them to some local source. The secret is, it was the religion of nature, and it existed in a certain state of society, however modified by climate and circumstances, wherever the sun shone, and the mind of man was impressible through the organs of his frame. The Chaldeans were a people, who together with the Egyptians, first contrived or invented for writing, those signs called hieroglyphics and allegorical symbols, forming the second and third progressive steps towards alphabetical writing. They also strictly preserved memorials of their ancestors, which were described in these characters on their pillars and obelisks; and when they arrived at the knowledge of letters, the same accounts were carefully maintained, both in their sacred

¹ The Parsees in India worship the sun at the present day.

archives and popular records. Ninus is stated to have seized upon Chaldea after Nimrod's death, and to have been succeeded by his wife Semiramis. After her a long list of voluptuous kings is handed down to us, closing with Sardanapalus, the last of the effeminate race. No part of this history, however, is to be relied on, for the first authentic records begin with Pul, the second founder of the kingdom, about 775 B. C.

The Mizraim, likewise the descendants of Ham, when they retired to their place of allotment, attended by their brethren the sons of Phut, founded the kingdom of Egypt 2188 years B. C., in the year of the world 1816, and 160 years after the flood. They first settled themselves at Zoan, near the entrance of Egypt, and afterwards built Thebes and Memphis. Our researches into the history of this very remote period, are cramped and obstructed by a system of chronology so incorrect, that of Usher and Blair, as not to possess even the advantage of probability; it is indeed surprising that such a system should have been chosen, when there were others superior in this respect. Thus different epochs of the deluge run as follows—

The Septuagint version	- - -	3246 B. C.
Hales	- - - - -	3155
Josephus	- - - - -	3146
Usher and Blair	- - - -	2348
Hebrew text	- - - - -	2288
Vulgar Jewish computation		2104

The extremes differ no less than 1142 years, and allow a reasonable time for the erection of the powerful kingdoms of Chaldea and Egypt. We are told in the Pentateuch,¹ that the flood happened in the six hundredth year of Noah's life, that the whole human race was destroyed with the

¹ Genesis, chap. vii. verse 2.

exception of eight persons, two of whom were very old; the world being repopled by the descendants of the three sons of Noah and their wives. To fix therefore so short a period as 160 years, is at variance with the course of nature; and when it is stated that these kingdoms had shortly afterwards magnificent cities, not built of wood but of hewn stone, with ramparts, it is surprising how such dates could ever have been put forth, and equally so, how they could have obtained any degree of credit. The system of Chronology by the Reverend Doctor Hales in his "New Analysis," &c. in regard to these very remote events, the creation and the deluge, is so superior to that of Usher and his followers, that it ought to be invariably adopted.

It has already been observed, that the Egyptians considered themselves the first of nations, they also believed themselves the authors of all the sciences, which in separate rays illuminated the rest of the world. To antiquity the Chaldeans are said to have a prior claim, although the Egyptians were unquestionably the second. It is known that the former when driven from Babylonia and Chaldea, betook themselves to Egypt, seizing upon Memphis about 511 years before the book of Exodus; they soon over-ran, and kept the country in subjection, whilst their princes, the shepherd kings, maintained themselves in Egypt, during a period of 259 years, till the native inhabitants at length rose and drove them out of the country; after which they settled on the adjoining coast of Syria, under the denomination of Philistines. The Egyptians, soon after the establishment of their monarchy, are stated to have opened a trade between the Arabian Gulf, or Red Sea, and the western coast of the great Indian continent. The commodities which they imported were carried by land from the Red Sea to the banks of the Nile, and conveyed down that river to the Mediterranean. But if the Egyptians in very early times applied themselves to commerce,

their attention to it was of short duration ; their fertile soil and mild climate, produced the necessities and comforts of life in such profusion, as to render them independent of other countries. It therefore became an established maxim among that people, whose ideas and institutions differed in many points from those of other nations, to renounce commercial intercourse with foreigners ; consequently they seldom went out of their own country, they held seafaring persons in dislike, and fortifying their harbours, rarely granted strangers admittance into them. It was in the decline of their power, and when a veneration for ancient maxims had much abated, that they again opened their ports, and resumed communication with foreigners.

Of the Chaldean history, as compared with the Egyptian, it is confessed that very little is known ; but we are certain that at a period so remote as the birth of Moses, the Egyptians had become proverbially famous among other nations for their wisdom, their antiquity, and early progress in the arts of civil life ; the honour of the invention of letters having been ascribed to their countryman Memnon, 1822 years before the Christian era ; and the Greeks, from whom all our knowledge of Gentile history must come, with one voice confess, that all their learning and wisdom came from Egypt,¹ either imported immediately by their own philosophers, or brought through Phœnicia by the sages of the east. Between the immediate successors of Menes, upwards of twenty centuries B. C., and the conquest of Egypt by Alexander the

¹ The Egyptians paid divine honours to the inventor of letters, whom they called Theuth. By the Greeks he was worshipped under the name of Hermes, and usually represented by a head, standing upon a quadrilateral basis ; no other part of the human figure was attached, as it alone was deemed requisite for rational communication. The head resembled that of a beautiful youth, wearing a petasus, or bonnet with two wings, the velocity of words in speech being denoted by these appendages.

Great, there is a wide gulph however, through which neither the boldest antiquarian has yet been able to establish a path, nor the eye of history to direct its vision. The land of the Pharaohs was an old country in the infant age of Greece; and their earliest writers described its grandeur, not only as having reached its consummation, but even as beginning to pass away; whilst the philosophers and historians who crossed the Mediterranean in search of knowledge, were astonished at the proofs of an antiquity which surpassed all ideas of recorded time, and at the appearance of a wisdom, genius, and opulence, of which they could hardly hope that their countrymen would believe the description. While the nations which at present make the greatest figure in the world, and influence most deeply the condition of human nature, had not yet passed the first stage of social life, in fact whose manners were utterly barbarous, the inhabitants of Thebes and Memphis had made great progress in civilization, and were gratifying a learned curiosity by inquiries into the constitution of the universe, and into the laws which regulate the movements of the heavenly bodies. As the rise of Egyptian power and wisdom preceded for ages the era of letters, the history of their more ancient kings, like those of the Babylonians and Assyrians, must have been lost, had the architectural monuments of the former people not been constructed of more imperishable substances than were to be found in the alluvial plains of Mesopotamia. Of the actual literature of Egypt itself, properly speaking, we know nothing; we are obliged to rest upon the evidence of the Greeks, who when the rest of Europe was in a state of barbarism, were receiving the rudiments of knowledge from their intercourse with the scholars of Thebes and Memphis; in further confirmation, it is certain that Egypt may in a great measure be called the academy from which Greece drew her stores of information; as Pythagoras, Thales, Lycurgus, Solon, Eudoxus, Plato, and other great men studied there. Indeed at one

time a Greek was not accounted truly learned, until he had resided a certain period on the banks of the Nile, conversed with the philosophers on the mysteries of their science, studied the laws, the government, and the institutions, examined and explored their everlasting monuments, and become in some measure initiated in the wisdom of one of the most remarkable nations that ever existed.

The narrative of Herodotus, confirmed by Diodorus Siculus, affords ample proof of the early civilization of the Egyptians, when he tells us that separate castes had long been established in that country, namely priests, including men of rank, the military, and artizans; the latter not only comprehending husbandmen and labourers, but all the classes which practise those arts necessary to the subsistence and ornament of life. The medical science must also have been carefully studied, for he adds, "There are a great many who practise this art; some attend to disorders of the eyes, others to those of the head, some take care of the teeth, others are conversant with all diseases of the intestines, and many attend to the cure of maladies which are less conspicuous." Experience, with the history of other countries, clearly prove to us, that many ages elapse before a state has so minutely regulated the various departments of professional science: the more deeply we consider this subject, the more clearly we perceive the undoubted claim of the Egyptians to an antiquity of very high standing. It is true, that like ancient Greece and Rome, Egypt does not present us with those beautiful and sublime effusions of poetry and eloquence, in the delights of which the scholar and the man of science are apt for a time to forget, that those states have also long since passed away; but so far as regards astronomy, the exact position of the principal buildings in reference to the four cardinal points, with one of their sides in all cases turned to the east, to which we may add the delineation of the twelve signs of the Zodiac,

the traces of which still remain in the temples of Eaneh and Dendera, the naming of the principal stars, and the grouping of the constellations, we are at liberty to conclude, that the Egyptians at a very remote age were at least practical astronomers. When we find that all the learning of Thales, by which he was enabled to calculate eclipses, and determine the solstitial and equinoctial points, was acquired from the Egyptian priests, six hundred years before the Christian era; that at a later period Eratosthenes was found qualified to measure a degree of the meridian, and from the result to deduce the circumference of the earth to an extraordinary degree of accuracy; that the day of the summer solstice was then so nicely observed, by means of a well long before dug at Syrene, from the surface of which the sun's disk was reflected entire, we can hardly hesitate to receive any hypothesis, which assumes an astronomical purpose in accounting for the architectural prodigies of ancient Egypt. On the progress of the Egyptians in architecture we possess a criterion, in the perfection to which, at a very early period, they had carried an art that has not only a close, but necessary dependence upon scientific deductions; when the magnificent buildings of Thebes were accomplished, and the splendid monuments of her kings erected, with the facts which present themselves to the view of the modern traveller, amid the desolations of Karnac, and the ruins of Luxor, we must come to the conclusion, that such stupendous works could not have been executed by a nation ignorant of mathematics and chemistry; neither could the pyramids, the obelisks, which still meet the eye in every part between Elephantine and the mouths of the Nile, have been raised, nor the monolithic temples executed, without the aid of such mechanical powers as have their origin in the calculations of philosophy.

The Phœnicians occupied the narrow tract of country between Syria and Judea to the north and south, and the

Mediterranean sea to the west ; it may be observed, that Chaldea, Egypt, Phœnicia, and Syria, were all neighbouring countries, and that a great similarity existed between their several languages. Although the Phœnicians¹ do not appear to have a fair claim to antiquity, either before the Chaldeans or Egyptians, it is certain that they were the first people who set an example of commercial intercourse between nations, particularly to the opposite shores of the Mediterranean, and by so doing, they proved the medium through which the learning, the laws, and religion of the Nile were planted in Greece ; the names of Cadmus and Cecrops continue to represent those missions or voluntary migrations, which at a comparatively late period, transported to Europe from Africa and Asia the treasures of oriental wisdom, associating an imperishable fame with the memory of Athens, and other states of Greece ; indeed the Phœnicians were a commercial people before the birth of Abraham, and previously to the Israelites leaving Egypt under Moses, Cecrops and Cadmus with their colonies had arrived in Greece. The fragments of Sanchoniatho are the most ancient specimens of alphabetical writing extant, after the Pentateuch ; he is stated to have been contemporary with Joshua, 1440 years B. C. These fragments, from their great antiquity, have given rise in some measure to the belief, that the Phœnicians were the first who invented letters and alphabetical writing ; and although such may not be correct, it is only justice to allow, that the present alphabet of the most civilized nations in Europe, with those of the ancient Greeks and Romans, are easily traced back to that of Cadmus, when he founded Thebes 1493 years before the Christian era.

From their situation and character, the Phœnicians were as favourable to the spirit of commerce and discovery, as

¹ The Phœnicians were a branch of the ancient Canaanites of Scripture.

the Egyptians were adverse to it. The territory which the former possessed was neither large nor fertile, commerce therefore was the only source from which they could derive opulence and power; accordingly the trade carried on by the Phœnicians of Sidon and Tyre, was far more extensive than that of any state in the ancient world. The genius of the people, the objects of their policy, and the spirit of their laws, were entirely commercial: they were a nation of merchants who aimed at the empire of the sea, and possessed it; their ships not only frequented all the ports in the Mediterranean, but they were the first who ventured beyond the ancient boundary of navigation, passing the Straits of Gibraltar; they not only visited, but drew their supplies of tin and lead from Spain and Britain.¹ It was doubtless the Phœnicians who supplied the Egyptians with these metals, and taught them their serviceable uses; they had imbibed strongly a spirit of monopoly, and to secure the whole trade of these valuable articles, they carefully concealed the sources from whence they were obtained. Whilst they extended their discoveries towards the north and west, they did not neglect to penetrate into the more opulent and fertile regions of the south and east; having rendered themselves masters of several commodious harbours near the bottom of the Arabian gulf, they established a regular intercourse with Arabia, and the continent of India on the one hand, with the eastern coast of Africa on the other. From these countries they imported many rare commodities unknown to the rest of the world, and during a long period engrossed that lucrative branch of commerce without a rival.

¹ The geographers of Greece who obtained their information from the Phœnicians, represented the *Insulæ Cassiterides*, or Tin Islands, as lying off the north coast of Spain, meaning the Scilly Islands, and Cornwall. Tin, though its ores are usually abundant, is rather a scarce metal, there being but few spots on the earth where it is known to exist.

To their descendants the Carthaginians, the Phœnicians transmitted their commercial spirit in full vigour. Carthage founded by them about 870 years before the Christian era, applied to trade and naval affairs with no less ardour, ingenuity and success, than its parent state, till it rivalled and in time surpassed Tyre in opulence and power, but appears not to have aimed at obtaining any share in the commerce with India; the Phœnicians had engrossed this, and had such a command of the Red Sea, as secured to them the exclusive possession of it. The commercial activity of the Carthaginians was exerted in another direction, without contending for the trade of the east with the mother country; they extended their navigation chiefly towards the west and north; following the course which the Phœnicians had opened, they also passed the Straits of Gibraltar, and traded with the inhabitants of Spain, France, and Britain. Whilst they acquired a knowledge of new countries in this part of the globe, they gradually carried their researches towards the south; they made considerable progress by land into the interior provinces of Africa, traded with some of them, and subjected others to their dominion. They sailed along the western coast of that continent almost to the tropics of Cancer, and planted several colonies. They discovered the Fortunate Islands, now known as the Canaries, the utmost boundary of ancient navigation in the western world. Carthage, like its parent state, grew rich and powerful through commerce; it became the rival of Rome for universal empire, but the contracted and selfish feelings which animated its commercial oligarchy, were unable to compete with the proud and stern spirit of the Roman people; it was taken and reduced to ashes 146 years B. C.

To the Phœnicians the discovery of glass has, with apparent correctness, been ascribed. Pliny relates that some merchants of that people, in a ship loaded with carbonate of soda from Egypt, stopped and went ashore on the

banks of the river Belus; having nothing to support their kettles, when dressing their food, they employed lumps of the carbonate for that purpose; the fire fused some of the soda, which uniting with fine sand of the river, the consequence was the formation of glass. The narrative is a reasonable one; it is probable that the discovery of glass originated in some such accident. The Phœnicians were famous for their purple dye, which they discovered about sixteen centuries before the Christian era. This colour, called the Tyrian, was given by two kinds of shell-fish which inhabit the Mediterranean, the buccinum and purpura; the liquor which they yielded was mixed in various proportions to produce particular shades.¹ Sidon was conquered, and Tyre destroyed after a siege of thirteen years by Nebuchadnezzar, about 572 B. C.: another city was shortly afterwards built a little way from the main land, called the Island City, or New Tyre; by trade and navigation it soon became powerful and opulent, but was taken and finally destroyed by Alexander the Great, 332 years before the Christian era.

The Hebrews, or Jews.

We are informed in sacred revelation,² that all the persons of the house of Jacob, or Israel, who went into Egypt, including Joseph, his wife and two sons, were three-score and ten, or seventy in number, according to the chronology of the Bible, 1706 years before the Christian era. The Pentateuch continues to instruct us, that the Jews increased and multiplied abundantly, and after the lapse of several ages, or 215 years, they were led forth out of Egypt by Moses, a populous nation, to take possession of Pales-

¹ This dye was known to the Egyptians in the time of Moses. At length the knowledge of it was lost, and lamented as irrecoverable; it has however, been recently discovered, and made known by Mr. Cole, of Bristol.

² Genesis, chap. xli. verse 27.

tine,¹ or the promised land, 1491 B. C.² During their long residence in Egypt, they must have acquired a knowledge of some useful arts; and as we are told that Moses their leader was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians,³ doubtless he communicated to his countrymen the knowledge of letters which he himself had acquired, with information in the higher departments of mechanical science, such as the proper method of working in the different metals,⁴ for which the Egyptians and Phœnicians were famous. That Moses had obtained a knowledge of letters and writing is evident from the command given to him, "Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua;"⁵ he accordingly wrote the Pentateuch, or the first five books of the Bible, excepting the last chapter of Deuteronomy, in the land of Moab, 1451 B. C.

¹ Palestine, or the holy land, extended about 200 miles in length, and 80 in breadth. It was separated from Edom on the south, by a range of high hills. The eastern boundary was formed by the sea of Sodom, or the lake Asphaltites, the river Jordan, and the sea of Tiberias. Upon the north it was separated from Phœnicia by the mountain anti-Libanus, and its western coast was washed by the Mediterranean.

² The epoch of the departure of the Israelites from Egypt does not seem to be precisely fixed :

According to Josephus and Hales, it was - - - 1648 B. C.

Scaliger - - - - - 1497

Vulgar Jewish chronology - - - 1312

Here the extremes differ 336 years.

³ The Acts of the Apostles, chap. vii. verse 22.

⁴ There is a mistake in translating the Hebrew word נְחֹשֶׁת (*necheset*) brass, instead of copper. In the eighth chapter of Deuteronomy, at the ninth verse, Moses says, "Out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass," it should be translated copper. Brass neither exists in the earth, nor any ore of it, it is always made artificially of copper and zinc; it must therefore have been copper, or an ore of copper, that was alluded to by Moses.

⁵ Exodus, chap. xvii. verse 14.

The Hebrews are allowed to be the most ancient poets known, and we have no evidence that they derived their instructions from the Egyptians. Their poetry is characterized by boldness, by a profusion of imagery, and by those sudden transitions which accompany uncontrolled emotion; the poetical figures are numerous, and those of the sublime are abundant, consisting in thought expressed in energetic and concise language, "Let there be light, and there was light." The form of poetry that abounds most in the Scriptures is the simplest and the earliest, the Lyric; the Psalms of David professedly belong to this order. In the elegiac may be ranked the Lamentations of Jeremiah. The Song of Solomon is an example of the pastoral; and the book of Proverbs is didactic. The epopœa and the drama appear to have been entirely unknown to the Hebrew people.

Although the Jewish writers are believed to have spoken by divine impulse, and might be supposed exempt from human laws, they still followed those which are the most general and imperious. They drew their imagery like all other poets, from the circumstances in which they lived, and the land of their birth furnished them with ample allusions. Thus Judea, often parched from dry weather in the summer, taught them forcibly to feel the want of water, and the delight of returning showers; it was also a hilly country, and when the rain fell it rushed along with violence. The mountains, Lebanon and Carmel, furnish frequent images of beauty; and the shocks of nature, earthquakes, whirlwinds, and tempests, are described under their most fearful appearances. In more subdued moments, agriculture and pasturage gave a tincture to Hebrew poetry, but its embellishments do not exhibit the refinements of luxury. A nation that had made such progress in lyric poetry, could not be ignorant of music, accordingly we find this art a principal accompaniment in feasts and religious ceremonies. The greatest lyric poet of the Hebrews, was also a good musi-

cian ; and the son of David, though not himself a performer, was a professed admirer of the art. The advancement in this art however was not so great as in poetry, which comes from an impulse of the mind, and requires little assistance from the kindred arts ; but music receives additions from various branches of knowledge, and owes its choicest sounds to the sciences of pneumatics, mechanics, and acoustics.

The Jews do not appear to have made any proficiency in the other branches of literature, or the arts. In prose they have left nothing comparable to what remains of their poetry. In sculpture and painting, they have bequeathed no monuments, and the merit of their graven images, as pieces of art, cannot now be estimated. This nation presents a singular contrast to its instructor the Egyptians, who were not imbued with the genius of poetry, but who accomplished many useful undertakings ; it is to them that the learned attribute the invention of alphabetical writing, and their claim to being the earliest geometricians is undisputed ; arithmetic grew up among them, and astronomy owes to them much of its early progress.

On the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity, they had so far forgotten the original Hebrew, that it was found necessary when the Pentateuch was read in the synagogues, to make a translation into Chaldee for the common people, and there are upwards of 260 verses of that language in the Bible at the present day. That a nation should in the short period of seventy years, forget its own language, is a curious circumstance, worthy of notice, as serving to illustrate the slight hold which a particular speech has upon the mind of an illiterate people. Indeed if it were not for their inspired poetry, the Jews would deserve no place among literary nations ; unacquainted with the epic and dramatic, labouring under the disadvantages of a feeble government, and neglect of their rulers, they were continually turning away from the

pure precepts of their own religion, to follow a gross and licentious idolatry. The sacred Scriptures of the Old Testament, were fixed and arranged nearly in their present form by Ezra the scribe, assisted by Nehemiah, after their return from the Babylonian captivity, about 452 years before the Christian era; and Ezra then adopted for the old Hebrew characters, the more beautiful and commodious Chaldee, which are now in use.¹ The Old Testament was translated from the Hebrew into Greek, by order of Ptolemy Philadelphus, called the Septuagint version, 284 B. C.; and the

¹ SAMARITAN,
Or Ancient Hebrew.

CHALDEE,
Or Modern Hebrew.

א	א aleph
ב	ב beth
ג	ג gimel
ד	ד daleth
ה	ה he
ו	ו vau
ז	ז zain
ח	ח cheth
ט	ט teth
י	י yod
כ	כ caph
ל	ל lamed
מ	מ mem
נ	נ nun
ס	ס samech
ע	ע oin
פ	פ pe
צ	צ jaddi
ק	ק koph
ר	ר resh
ש	ש shin
ת	ת tau

The only difference between the Samaritan and Hebrew, consists in the peculiar characters that are used; the names and powers of the letters being the same in both.

books of the New Testament were collected into one volume, and translated into Latin by the elder fathers of the church in the second century. There were however no such divisions into chapter, paragraph, and verse, as at present exist. These divisions and subdivisions were made in after times : by Cardinal Hugo in the thirteenth century, Latin version ; by Rabbi Mordecai Nathan, in the Old Testament, in the fifteenth century, Hebrew version ; by Robert Stephens, the celebrated printer at Paris, about the middle of the sixteenth century, Greek version ; and finally by the English translators into English, during the persecution of Queen Mary, called the Geneva version, or Bible. The reasons of all these individuals were the same, to make it a book of concordance, and reference.¹ It is a matter of question what was the form of the primitive church, and the nature of its government ; on this head much difference of opinion exists, not only between the Roman Catholics and Protestants, but also amongst the numerous sects of the latter. It is however an opinion, probably the most judicious on the subject, that Jesus Christ and his disciples, confining their precepts to the pure doctrines of religion, have left all christian societies to regulate their frame and government, in the manner best suited to the civil constitutions of the countries in which they are established. Fortunately in the present day it is beginning to be understood, that as a good religion must have universal charity for its grand acting principle, it is an abuse of it when used as the means for strife and contention.

It may not be injudicious to offer a few observations here on the subject of Hebrew chronology. The Jews in various parts of the world have about a dozen systems of chronology, all at variance with one another ; those of Palestine however, counted by generations, and St. Matthew in the first chapter of his gospel, at the seventeenth verse, has divided the period

¹ See Reeves's preface to his Bible.

from Abraham, the founder of his nation, to the birth of our Saviour, into three epochs of fourteen generations each, making in the whole forty-two generations, and such is the calculation which we receive as correct. Moses informs us that in his time, the usual boundary of the life of man was threescore and ten, or seventy years; and he adds, "that if by reason of more strength it were prolonged to fourscore, it became but labour and sorrow."¹ Now we know that human life in the present day is quite as good as when the Jewish lawgiver wrote his opinion, it is therefore not difficult to arrive at a near conclusion, regarding the antiquity to which the Jews have a fair claim. After the return from the Babylonian captivity, the Jews continued to occupy Palestine, although subjected to several invasions and persecutions, from 536 years before the Christian era, till the year of our Lord 67, when their turbulent and factious conduct drew upon them the vengeance of Imperial Rome; Vespasian in that year invaded the country, and conquered great part of it: the siege of Jerusalem was then commenced by Titus, and after the unfortunate city had undergone the extremes of cruelty, famine, and horror, it was taken, razed to the ground, and the plough passed over it A. D. 70, the whole country being finally subdued by the Romans three years afterwards.

The Syrians.


The language of the Syrians was a distinct tongue in the days of Jacob; it was also the language of Mesopotamia. The Syrians were celebrated for extensive knowledge and skill in the fine arts, and from their happy situation, almost in the centre of the old world, they greatly enriched themselves, like their neighbours the Phœnicians, by trade and commerce. Notwithstanding the antiquity of ancient Syria, the oldest characters, or letters of that people at present

¹ Psalm, xc. ver. 10.

known, do not go further back than about three centuries before the Christian era. They are of two sorts, the Estrangelo, which is the more ancient, and that called the Fshito, the simple, or common character, which is more beautiful and expeditious. The Syriac is still cultivated by the Nestorian and Maronite Christians in the east. Syria was subdued by Tiglath-Pileser about 740 B. C., conquered by Alexander the Great, and finally reduced to a Roman province 64 B. C.

The Arabians, who profess to be the descendants of Jokshan and of Ishmael, the natural sons of Abraham, have inhabited the country they at present possess for upwards of 3000 years, without being completely subjected to any foreign power; their language may therefore at the first view appear to be very ancient: the following however must be laid down as a fixed rule:—that all the languages of rude nations, particularly among roving tribes, are constantly changing and cannot be depended upon. The two principal dialects are—the first, styled by the oriental writers, the Arabic of Hamgar, spoken by the genuine Arabs; the second, the Koreish, the pure, or defecated, in which Mahomet wrote the Koran. The old Arabic characters are said to be of high antiquity; the alphabet consists of twenty-eight letters, which are somewhat similar to the ancient Kufic, in which the first copies of the Koran were written. The present Arabic characters were formed by Ebn Moklah, a learned Arabian, who lived nearly 300 years after Mahomet, or about A. D. 960. We learn from the Arabians themselves, that their present alphabet is not ancient. The Arabic is still the vulgar language in Egypt, the shores of Africa, as well as in Arabia and Palestine; it is also extensively cultivated in Turkey, Armenia, Mesopotamia, Persia, India, and Tartary.

After carefully tracing the claims of the different oriental nations to the highest antiquity, the author feels obliged to



decide as follows; firstly, the Chaldeans; secondly, the Egyptians; thirdly, the Phœnicians; fourthly, the Jews; fifthly, the Syrians; sixthly, the Arabians.

India, and the Sanscrit.

The mighty empire established in India by Great Britain within the last century, has brought under the view and consideration of learned men, a very ancient, copious, and refined language, the Sanscrit: being possessed of a rich literature, it has given rise to a new branch of philological science, that of comparative grammar. The Sanscrit was introduced into India when the Bhraminical race obtained possession of the country; it appears in its most ancient form in the Vedas, said to be of the thirteenth century before the Christian era,¹ and in that state is nearly related to the Zend, the ancient language of Persia. The classical Sanscrit on the contrary having once become fixed, has for about 3000 years, partly as a living and partly as a learned language, retained the same construction. Out of the Sanscrit however, even in comparatively early times, dialects arose, which gradually became further removed from the original and from each other, and from these dialects the languages now spoken in India are derived. There is a law which pervades the whole of them, and it is worthy of remark, that this law is precisely the same as that according to which the romance-languages of Europe, the Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and French, have grown out of the Latin; there is the same softening, assimilation, and exclusion of the harsher sounds; the same simplification of forms, substitution of particles for cases, and periphrastic conjugations. The general name given to these languages by the Indian grammarians is Pracrita, that is, derivative languages.

¹ Colebrooke.

The oldest of the Pracrita dialects, and that which deviates least from the Sanscrit is the Pali, which has become the sacred language of the Bhuddhists. It was carried by them from Northern India to the Island of Ceylon, where it has continued to exist, and it possesses a copious literature; but the language, which in a peculiar sense is called Pracrit, properly Maharashtri, for its local origin is the country of the Mahrattas, differs little from the Pali, and is used by the Jains. The Magadhi, originally spoken in Behar, and the Sauraseni on the banks of the Jumna, are further removed from the Sanscrit. In addition to the above, there are numerous more modern dialects, among which it is only necessary to mention the Vrajabhasha, as being the parent of the Hindustani. The Pali appears as a perfectly formed language in the Buddhist works carried to Ceylon in the fourth, and the Maghadhi in the third century, before the Christian era.

The Sanscrit literature begins with the Vedas, and is founded upon them; it comprehends epic poetry, the laws, or Sastras, the Puranas, a collection of legends and traditions, artificial, new epic, dramatic poetry, and philosophy. Historical literature is almost entirely wanting, with the exception of a modern chronicle of Orissa;¹ there is only one historical work in existence in the Sanscrit, "The Chronicle of Cashmere," properly entitled "Rajatarangini, the stream of the kings;" it was written in the twelfth century by Kalhana, partly from ancient sources, which he mentions. There have been three successive editions of this chronicle, which describe the period of the Mohammedan dominion, down to Akbar. The work is written in the artificial style in the epic metre, and has somewhat the form of a Purana; the first part of it has principally been drawn from Buddhist sources. It

¹ Abridged by Stirling, Asiatic Researches.


was made known in Europe by Wilson's¹ Analysis, and afterwards edited at Calcutta in 1835.

Philosophy is of great antiquity in India; lyric poetry in the proper sense of the term did not exist; instead of it there is epigrammatic, didactic, and descriptive poetry. As the Sanscrit is in itself so regular and perfect, its laws are easily discovered, and philology has become the most, probably the only valuable part of Indian literature. The Indian grammarians are much superior to those of any other ancient people; they have a strong predilection for the science of grammar, and their writings on it are numerous; we are unable to trace its gradual formation however, the system appears at once in its complete state in the aphorisms of Panini, who lived in the middle of the fourth century B. C. The different Pracrit dialects have also been exhibited in their different grammars; the oldest work of this description is that of Katyayana, who is also called Vararuchi, written about 330 years before the Christian era, contemporary with Alexander the Great.

The author will now conclude this chapter, which he has found to be one of no little difficulty, with a few observations dictated by necessity and propriety. The immense length of time which elapsed from the deluge till the period when Greek history is considered authentic, 776 years before the Christian era, presented numerous and impassable difficulties to the ancient, and of course must present greater to modern historians. The inquirer of the present day, anxious to obtain something like authentic information, is first required to carry back his imagination to an era many hundreds of years prior to the existence of written deeds, and then he is gravely introduced to the gods and demigods, who, as he is told, had once condescended to dwell on the banks of the Nile. If, impatient of the fables related to him respecting such supernatural personages, he

¹ Asiatic Researches.

should ask, who was the first sovereign that reigned over Egypt? He is encouraged by being told that his name was Menes, and his history is not altogether unknown; but he soon finds out that the exploits of this prince too much resemble the achievements of the god Osiris; and the limits between mythology, and the annals of a mortal race, are by no means fully established. Fatigued with vain conjectures, and unable to separate facts from fiction, he may resolve to change his plan, in the hope of being able to thread his way through the dark labyrinth of Egyptian chronology; adopting the philosophical rule, he determines to proceed from the known to the unknown; and collecting some comparatively recent and well-attested fact, of which the date is considered as certain, he obtains possession of one end of a chain, which he trusts he may succeed in tracing link after link, until he shall arrive at the other extremity. He pursues his way trusting now to one guide, then to another; but unfortunately he soon becomes convinced that authorities oppose him in every direction, he is not only entangled by fable, but also by conflicting statements and contradictions. As he advances, he is further dismayed by the unwelcome discovery, that as his guides become more ignorant, their confidence increases in proportion, and their statements abound with fictions, sufficient to stagger the strongest belief. He is now satisfied that truth cannot be obtained on such uncertain grounds, and therefore consents to imitate all those who have gone before him; to build conjectures instead of establishing facts; to admit what is probable where he cannot find demonstration; and to allow what is possible, where he cannot reach unquestionable evidence. His difficulties augment as he removes farther from the point whence he had originally started; like the traveller who sets out upon a journey, at the beginning he has sufficient light to conduct him on his way, but he has not gone far, when he finds that the day is closing; the light grows



more feeble at every step he takes, and the shades fall blacker and thicker around him, until he is at length shrouded in total darkness. The only judicious plan therefore appears to be the adoption of Sir Isaac Newton's excellent maxim, "Never to admit for authentic history what is antecedent to letters," which will go back to upwards of 1800 years before the Christian era. Nevertheless to the oriental nations we owe a debt of admiration and gratitude. To the Hebrews, or Jews, we are indebted for the sacred volume of Divine Revelation. It has been remarked that the Jews were men in religion, and children in every thing else; and this observation may be exactly reversed in the case of the Egyptians. To them however, we owe the first, the noblest, the most useful art after language which we possess, that of writing, with the rudiments of astronomy, arithmetic, geometry, and architecture.

CHAPTER V.

RISE AND PROGRESS OF LETTERS, WRITING, AND LITERATURE,
AMONG THE GREEKS, WITH THEIR CHRONOLOGY ;

OR,

ANCIENT NAMES OF GREECE—PRINCIPAL STATES—WHEN
FOUNDED—THE GREAT ANTIQUITY OF GREECE, AS COM-
PARED WITH THE OTHER NATIONS OF EUROPE—RISE OF LET-
TERS—LITERATURE INDIGENOUS TO THE SOIL OF GREECE,
ALTHOUGH THE RUDIMENTS OF SCIENCE AND THE ALPHA-
BET APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN DERIVED FROM THE EGYPT-
IANS AND PHŒNICIANS—THE PERIOD WHEN LETTERS BE-
CAME GENERAL—AGE OF HOMER—FIRST OR GRECIAN AGE
OF LEARNING—CHRONOLOGY OF GREECE, ITS DEPENDANCE
ON THE PARIAN CHRONICLE, OR ARUNDELLIAN MARBLE, AND
OLYMPIC GAMES.

Greece, called by the oriental nations Ionia, by its
ancient inhabitants Hellas, by the Romans Græcia, and

thence by us Greece, so singularly illustrious in the annals of mankind, was of small extent; the whole Grecian continent, including Macedonia, not containing more than 3850 square leagues,¹ and its population never exceeded from three-and-a-half to four millions of inhabitants. It was divided into a number of small states, of which the principal were

Athens, founded by Cecrops, the Egyptian 1556 B. C.			
Thebes	-	by Cadmus, the Phœnician	1493 -
Lacedemon, or Sparta,	by Lelex	- - -	1490 -
Corinth	-	by Sisiphus	- - 1404 -
Macedon	-	by Caranus	- - 794 -

Greece known at an era far beyond the history of any other part of Europe, was the first country in that continent which emerged from the savage state; this advantage it appears to have owed entirely to its readier means of communication with the civilized nations of the East, indeed it fills up the middle link of the chain formed and continued by Egypt, Greece, and Rome; for the Greek letters are found to be similar to the ancient Egyptian, and from the Greek was derived the Latin orthography, and thence that of Western Europe. Among the effects of this high antiquity, one is particularly remarkable; the oldest traditionary memorials of Greece relate not to war and conquest, generally the chief materials for the annals of barbarous states, but to the invention or introduction of laws indispensable to political science, and of arts necessary to human life; such as the institution of marriage, the production of the olive, the culture of the vine, the

¹ "To a traveller in Greece," says Hobhouse, "there are few things more remarkable than the diminutive extent of those countries which have filled such a wide space in fame. A man might very easily at a moderate pace ride from Livadia to Thebes and back again, between breakfast and dinner; and the tour of all ~~Greece~~ might certainly be made in two days without baggage."

sowing of corn, and the protection of bees for their honey and wax; hence while the origin of other ancient nations is matter only of conjecture to the antiquarian, that of the Grecian people demands attention from the historian; it is in vain however to inquire the precise period when Greece attained a superior degree of policy and civilization, for many centuries elapsed before written records became common, and their traditions are not only vague, but inexplicably mixed with fable: in attempting therefore to describe the rise and progress of letters among the Greeks, there is a field of fable and conjecture to analyze, in order to discover truth from fiction. It is certain that this remarkable people arrived at the knowledge of letters much later than the oriental nations: as all our information however of Gentile or profane history is derived from them, this inquiry possesses not only much interest, it is likewise one of great importance.

It was a fixed principle laid down by the great Newton, never to admit for history what was antecedent to letters, for he says, that traditionary truths cannot be long preserved without some change in themselves, or some addition of foreign circumstances, so that in time so many changes take place, that only a few outlines of the general occurrences remain. Of the correctness of this excellent maxim, daily experience convinces us; it therefore becomes necessary to find out at what period letters arrived at such a state among the Greeks, that we are justified in affording them credit. Cadmus the Phœnician, when he founded Thebes, introduced or brought across with him the first sixteen letters of the Greek alphabet; to these four were added by Palamedes during the time of the Trojan war, and the remaining number by Simonides, about 654 years later. Writing however was known in Greece long anterior to this last-named period; it is stated in chapter iii. page 21, that about twenty marks for sounds were

sufficient to form an alphabet of letters, although writing certainly did not become common before the days of Socrates.

The following is the primeval alphabet, introduced by Cadmus into Greece, from Phœnicia, when he founded Thebes, 1493 years before the Christian era.

LARGE.	SMALL.	
A	α	Alpha.
B	β	Beta.
Γ	γ	Gamma.
Δ	δ	Delta.
E	ϵ	Epsilon.
I	ι	Iota.
K	κ	Kappa.
Λ	λ	Lambda.
M	μ	Mu.
N	ν	Nu.
O	\omicron	Omicron.
Π	π	Pi.
P	ρ	Rho.
Σ	σ	Sigma.
T	τ	Tau.
Υ^1	υ	Upsilon.

¹ The late Sir Daniel Sandford, in his translation of the Greek Grammar from the German, to which he has added his own remarks, says that the alphabet of Cadmus had only fifteen letters, being an equal number with the original Hebrew and old Latin, but that the sixteenth, Υ (*upsilon*) was shortly afterwards added.



Added by Palamedes during the time of the Trojan war,
or about 1184 B. C.

LARGE.	SMALL.	
Z	ζ	Zeta.
Θ	θ	Theta.
Φ	φ	Phi.
Χ	χ	Chi.

Completed by Simonides, the Poet of Cos, about 530
years B. C., by the addition of

Ξ	ξ	Xi.
Ψ	ψ	Psi.
Ω	ω	Omega.

and by giving H, η (Eta) its proper position, although it
is considered by some only as an aspiration.

The completed Greek alphabet of Simonides was used on
coins and inscriptions in Attica about 520 years B. C.¹

¹ The following characters were likewise used in the older
inscriptions.

For β	Beta.	ϐ
γ	Gamma.	γ̣
ζ	Zeta.	ζ̣
θ	Theta.	θ̣
π	Pi.	π̣
ρ	Rho.	ρ̣
σ	Sigma.	σ̣
τ	Tau.	τ̣

The Greek alphabet when completed :

LARGE.	SMALL.	
A	α	Alpha.
B	β	Beta.
Γ	γ	Gamma.
Δ	δ	Delta.
E	ϵ	Epsilon.
Z	ζ	Zeta.
H	η	Eta.
Θ	θ	Theta.
I	ι	Iota.
K	κ	Kappa.
Λ	λ	Lambda.
M	μ	Mu.
N	ν	Nu.
Ξ	ξ	Xi.
O	\omicron	Omicron.
Π	π	Pi.
P	ρ	Rho.
Σ	σ	Sigma.
T	τ	Tau.
Υ	υ	Upsilon.
Φ	ϕ	Phi.
X	χ	Chi.
Ψ	ψ	Psi.
Ω	ω	Omega. ¹


¹ The Greek, a powerful, copious, and expressive language, had various dialects, which arose from the peculiar pronunciation of the inhabitants in different parts of the country, occasioning a change in its orthography. The Attic founded upon the epic, or Homeric, and subdivided into the old, the middle, and the new, was considered the most elegant and classical ; its name was derived from Attica ; the political and literary pre-eminence of the Athenians, or people of Attica, rendering it eventually the most universal dialect of Greece. The Ionic, spoken chiefly in Asia Minor, was smooth and harmonious. The Attic was distinguished by its contraction of vowels, the Ionic used the uncontracted inflexion of nouns and

There are difficulties thrown in the way of investigating the rise of Greek literature, by the misconceptions and mis-statements of the Greeks themselves; and although our knowledge of Gentile history must be derived from them, as the only source we have, we are required to be cautious in receiving their accounts with too much facility; for their traditions, with those of the Romans who copied from them, are often completely fabulous. Owing perhaps to a natural vanity, the Greeks adopted foreign history, and supposed it to have been of their own country, in very high ages of antiquity; they mistook places for persons, formed divinities out of titles and attributes, and gave to their imaginary heroes, the names of collective bodies of people, till at length every Grecian mountain acquired its *Oreads*, every wood its *Dryads*, every fountain its *Naiad*, the sea its *Tritons*, and its *Nereids*, and every river its god; the variety of seasons produced the hours; and the *Muses* and *Graces* were the offspring of the genius of the people. In short the Greeks so multiplied their deities and heroes, that many of their common departments are to be set aside as inconsistent and idle: it was this conduct which brought upon Solon, the wise and amiable Athenian lawgiver, the just but bitter censure of the priest of Egypt, who accused him and his countrymen of gross puerility and ignorance; and compelled Porphyry, the Platonic philosopher, to admit with astonishment, that numerous different names applied to their deities and heroes were all originally meant for one and the same individual.

When we remember that Athens, far superior in polite literature to the other states of Greece, was founded 1556

years. The Doric and Eolic were more harsh and unpolished than the preceding; the former had a broad pronunciation, and was used by the Spartans, Dorians, Sicilians, Rhodians, and Retans; the latter by the Eolians and Bœotians; it had no dual form, and resembled the Latin more strongly than the others.

years before the Christian era, and that the other principal states were also founded shortly, at all events, at no great interval of time afterwards—it does appear a very long period, that upwards of a thousand years should have elapsed, before learning became general in Greece; and the subject is one which requires a little patient investigation for its elucidation. The Greek leaders, when they founded the various states, appear to have been little better than the heads or captains of small tribes; their first attention in a strange country was naturally turned to the means of procuring subsistence by agricultural labour; to protect themselves from the inclemency of the weather by architecture, however simple its first designs may have been; by laws of marriage, and other good rules to restrain their unruly passions; and to study the art of war as a safeguard against their enemies. The constant disturbances which almost perpetually harassed the Greek states, either of an internal or of an external nature; their numerous wars with that tumultuous form of public liberty, which allowed all, even the lowest classes, to interfere in some way or other with the government, were great drawbacks, if not actual preventatives to the study of science. In addition to these, we in the present day, with the inestimable advantages of printing, books, paper, and so forth, can scarcely form a fair opinion of the difficulties the Greeks had to contend with, from the want of light and portable substances, upon which they might express in writing their ideas and feelings; when, instead of the pen flowing on the commodious and lasting materials of parchment and paper, the engraver required to be employed on plates of brass, or the chisel on blocks of marble, for it does not appear that the Greeks were acquainted with preparing the leaves, or inner bark of trees for writing, until about 550 years before the Christian era—we begin to appreciate the numerous obstacles of almost every description with which they had to contend, calculated to retard learning. It has likewise been found



among the ancients, that infant states were extremely slow in mastering the first rudiments of literature, but when these were acquired, their advance was frequently rapid; and we know that on a knowledge of letters becoming general, a host of excellent writers sprang up in the various sciences, and the Athenians in particular then imbibed that exquisite taste for the refinements of language, which has made them the wonder and admiration of all succeeding ages.

In all nations poetry is of greater antiquity than prose composition, imagination and sentiment having the start of reason. The earliest prose writers in Greece, Pherecydes of Scyros, and Cadmus of Miletus, are stated by Pliny to have lived in the reign of Cyrus, king of Persia, upwards of 350 years posterior to Homer; any remains of the more ancient poets, such as Linus, Orpheus,¹ &c. being of far too uncertain and suspicious a nature to deserve attention. Homer, then the first of the Grecian poets, flourished about 907 years before the Christian era. He appears to have followed the occupation of a wandering minstrel, and to have composed his poems in detached fragments, separate ballads, and episodes. Lycurgus is said to have brought them into Greece from among the Ionians of Asia Minor; but it was Pisistratus of Athens, who first employed learned men to collect and methodize these fragments, about 545 B. C., and to his care we owe the complete poems of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*; he also founded the first public library at Athens about 528 B. C. A more perfect edition was prepared by Aristotle for his pupil, Alexander the Great, who is reported to have esteemed them so highly, that he kept them in a golden casket under his pillow when he slept. Herodotus, styled by Cicero the father of history, because he is the most ancient author, whose writings of

¹ His poem on the rape of Proserpine, said to have been written 1374 B. C.

that kind have been handed down to posterity, wrote his nine books of general history in the Ionic dialect, comprising a period of nearly 300 years—445 B. C.

It was Thales¹ however, who after having studied at Memphis in Egypt, founded the Ionic sect, and by giving lectures on astronomy and natural philosophy, first drew the attention of the Greeks to polite learning, 600 B. C. He was immediately followed by Anaxagoras of Clazomene, who fixed himself at Athens; he again was succeeded by Archelaus, and then by Socrates, the great founder of moral philosophy. It is at this period, that the first, or Grecian age of learning, is considered to have commenced, about the beginning of the Peloponnesian war, and extending to the reign of Alexander the Great, or from 480 till 320 years before the Christian era—when flourished the historians Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon; the philosophers Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and Democritus; the physician Hippocrates; the orators Demosthenes, Æschines, Lysias, and Isocrates; the lyric, tragic, and comic poets, Anacreon, Pindar, Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes, and Meander; the sculptors, Phidias, Praxiteles, and Lysippus; the painters, Zeuxis, Parrhasius, Timanthes, and Apelles, with several others.

It is not among the Greeks that we are to look for the greatest improvements in the necessary arts of life: in agriculture, manufactures, and commerce, they were never highly distinguished; in these they were behind the Egyptians and Phœnicians. For instance, iron must have been common in Egypt in the time of Moses, for he mentions

¹ The seven sages of Greece were Thales; Solon, the wise and amiable Athenian lawgiver; Chilo, of Lacedemon; Pittacus, the deliverer of Mitylene, in Lesbos; Bias, prince of Priene, in Ionia; Cleobulus, of Lindus, in the island of Rhodes; and Periander, of Corinth.

furnaces for working iron,¹ ores from which it was extracted,² and tells us that swords,³ knives,⁴ axes,⁵ and tools for cutting stones,⁶ were then made of that metal. Now iron exists very rarely in the earth in a metallic state, it is commonly in the state of an oxide; and the processes necessary to extract metallic iron from that ore are much more complicated, and require greater skill than the reduction of gold, silver, and copper from their respective ores. Iron, in its pure state, is too soft to be applied to the above-mentioned uses; it is obvious therefore, that not only iron but steel⁷ also were in common use in Egypt. During the Trojan war, which occurred several centuries after the time of Moses, Homer represents his heroes armed with swords of copper hardened by tin, and as never using any weapons of iron whatever. In such estimation was it then held, that Achilles, when he celebrated games in honour of Patroclus, proposes a ball of iron as one of his most valuable prizes.⁸

“ Then hurl’d the hero, thundering on the ground,
 A mass of iron (an enormous round),
 Whose weight and size the circling Greeks admire,
 Rude from the furnace, and but shaped by fire.
 This mighty quoit *Ætion* wont to rear,
 And from his whirling arm dismiss’d in air;
 The giant by Achilles slain, he stow’d
 Among his spoils the memorable load.
 For this he bids those nervous artists vie
 That teach the disk to sound along the sky.
 Let him whose might can hurl this bowl, arise;
 Who farthest hurls it, takes it as his prize:

¹ Deut. chap. iv. verse 20.

² Deut. chap. viii. verse 9.

³ Numb. chap. xxxv. verse 16.

⁴ Levit. chap. i. 17.

⁵ Deut. chap. xviii. verse 5.

⁶ Deut. xxvii. verse 5.

⁷ Modern science has discovered that iron is a simple body, and steel a compound of iron and carbon.

⁸ *Iliad*, lib. xxiii. l. 826.

If he be one enrich'd with large domain
Of downs for flocks and arable for grain,
Small stock of iron needs that man provide,
His hinds and swains whole years shall be supplied
From hence, nor ask the neighbouring city's aid
For ploughshares, wheels, and all the rural trade."

This mass of iron large enough to supply a shepherd or a ploughman for five years, is a sufficient proof of the scarceness, and high estimation in which that metal was held during the time of Homer; and the truth of Homer's description is confirmed by the modern analysis of that great chemist Klaproth, who found that the copper swords of the ancients were actually hardened to form cutting instruments by the addition of tin.¹ Unfortunately for the ancients, the arts and manufactures stood in a very different degree of estimation among them from what they do in modern days; their artists and manufacturers were chiefly slaves. The citizens of Greece and Rome devoted themselves to politics and war; such of them as turned their attention to learning, confined themselves to oratory, which was a fashionable and important study; or to history, or poetry. The only scientific pursuits which engaged their attention were politics, ethics, and mathematics. Unless Archimedes is to be considered an exception, scarcely any of the various branches of physics and mechanical philosophy, which constitute so great a portion of modern science, attracted the attention of the ancients. In consequence of the contemptible light in which mechanical employments were viewed by the Greeks and Romans, we look in vain in their writings for accurate details respecting the processes which they followed. The only exception to this general neglect and contempt for the arts and trades, is Pliny the elder, whose object in his natural history was to collect into one focus all that was known at the period when he lived. His

¹ Beitrage vi. 81.

work displays vast reading and great erudition ; it is to him that we are chiefly indebted for the knowledge of the chemical arts which were practised by the ancients ; but the low estimation in which these arts were held, appears evident from the want of information which Pliny so frequently displays, and the erroneous statements which have been recorded respecting their processes, by this highly-talented and indefatigable natural historian.

It was in natural ability and talent, and in brilliancy of imagination, that the ancient Greeks stood confessedly superior to all. While succeeding nations have been only copyists, they were the original founders of literature ; it was actually indigenous to the soil of their country, and the human mind is dazzled in contemplating the splendid genius of that extraordinary people. The Greek authors were guided by no antecedent system ; their compositions were formed on no other model than the objects themselves which they delineated, and the living passions they portrayed ; their earliest writers took possession of the most striking objects for description, and the most probable occurrences for fiction, and left little to those that followed, but transcriptions of the same events, and new combinations of the same images. Dr. Johnson at one time intended to write a work, showing that the quantity of invention in the world is not large, and that the same images and incidents have, with no great variation, served all the authors who have ever written.¹ Had he prosecuted his intention, he would have found the notion he entertained fully confirmed by the history both of dramatic and romantic fiction ; he would have perceived the incapacity of the most active and fertile imagination, greatly to diversify the common characters and incidents of life, which on a superficial view, one might suppose to be susceptible of infinite combinations ; he would have found that while Plautus and Terence closely

¹ Boswell's Life of Johnson.

copied from the Greek dramatists, even Ariosto has scarcely diverged in his comedies from the paths of Plautus. The manifold witcheries of the Odyssey, and the harmony of the noble hexameter, made an entire conquest of the fancy and ears of the proud and noble Romans, and the conquered became the honoured and loved of the conquerors. Let ancient Greece then possess that large share of admiration and respect, to which she is so justly entitled by her self-cultivated talent and transcendant merit.

The Chronology of Greece.

There is not a circumstance of Grecian history, which has been more inquired into by learned men of ancient and modern times, than its chronology ; and as history cannot hold together without some system for fixing the period of events, it appears a part of the office which the author has undertaken, to offer his opinion, with an explanation of the grounds on which it is founded. When a nation is first emerging from barbarism, all views are directed to the future ; past transactions are of so little consequence, that a point from which accounts of time may originate is not an obvious want, so that the deficiency is beyond remedy before it is felt. Undoubtedly however, poetry and song were the first vehicles of history ; the oldest Grecian prose writers known to the ancients themselves, were Cadmus of Miletus, and Pherecydes of Scyros, who lived in the reign of Cyrus, king of Persia. Herodotus, styled the father of history, for the reasons before-mentioned, simply describes the time of events by saying they happened so many hundred years before his time, which scarcely fixes them within half a century. The more exact Thucydides, commonly reckons backward, from the year in which the Peloponnesian war was concluded, but his account goes only a little way. A short time afterwards, Hippias of Elis, towards the hundredth Olympiad, published a catalogue of the victors in the Olympic games ; Plutarch informs us, however,

that it had little reputation for accuracy. Ephorus, the disciple of Isocrates, in his chronological history of Greece, from the return of the Heracleids, or descendants of Hercules, 1104 B. C. to the 20th year of Philip of Macedon, digested his calculations of dates by generations only. The first systematic use of the Olympian catalogue for the purpose of chronology, was made by Timæus Siculus, in his general history, written about a hundred years after the catalogue of Hippias; his work is unfortunately lost. In the reign of Ptolemy Lagus, one of Alexander's generals, who, when he ascended the throne of Egypt, assumed the cognomen of Soter, Eratosthenes, librarian at Alexandria, 270 B. C. digested a chronological system by the Olympiads, so much more complete than any before known, that he has had the honour of being considered the father of scientific chronology; but his work is lost, and also that of Apollodorus, the Athenian, who followed him; although fragments of the work of the former have been preserved in the Chronicon of Eusebius, and the Stromata of Clemens Alexandrinus. Notwithstanding the above losses, we are fortunate in having the Parian chronicle, composed 264 years before the Christian era, and brought to this country from the Levant by the Earl of Arundel. The authority of this valuable and important register has been questioned, and assertions put forth presumptive of its being incorrect: but on a review of the whole controversy, the arguments for its authenticity greatly preponderate.

The Parian chronicle¹ was engraved on a coarse kind of marble or stone, five inches thick, which, when Selden first viewed it, measured 3 feet 7 inches, by 2 feet 7. The top was imperfect, the lower corner on the right hand having been broken off, and the right side being only 2 feet 11 inches. It contained at that time 93 lines, reckoning the imperfect ones, and might originally have contained a hundred; upon an average the lines consist of 130 letters, all

¹ Or Arundelian marble.

capitals, in close continuation, unbroken into words, like the oldest Greek manuscripts. The ancient curtailed form of the Pi, Γ is observed, the prostrate Eta Ξ is used for the Zeta; and there are some smaller capitals, particularly the Omicron, Omega, and Theta, intermixed with the larger. The whole possesses that plainness and simplicity, which are amongst the surest marks of antiquity, bearing a general resemblance, although not a servile imitation, of the most authentic monuments of the same date.¹ There are two methods of computation in the chronicle observed by Selden, and all the editors of it, being a difference of about 26 years, which is not accidental but designed, running uniformly through all the dates of the heroic period, from Cecrops to the destruction of Troy, whereas in the second or historic period, the two methods agree to the end. In its perfect state, it exhibited a chronological detail of the principal events of Greece, and the neighbouring states, from the time of Cecrops 1582, or deducting 26 years, 1556 B.C. to the Archonship of Diognetus at Athens, 264 B. C., but 90 years of the chronicle being lost, it now ends at the Archonship of Diotimus, 354 years before the Christian era.

Eras of the Olympiads.

Οὐτ' Ὀλυμπίας ἀγῶνα
 Φερέτερον ἀνδασσμεν.

“Nothing better than the Olympic games
 Can we celebrate.” PINDAR, ODE I.

These memorable games were originally instituted in honour of Jupiter Olympias, by the Phrygian Pelops, who settled in the Grecian peninsula, called from him Peloponnesus, about 1350 B.C. According to the Parian chronicle, they were repeated by the Theban Hercules about 1325 years before the Christian era; and after a long interruption,

¹ See a fac-simile of the characters and of the stone itself, in Hewlett's Vindication, page 50.

restored in part by Iphitus, king of Elis, and celebrated at Olympia, on the banks of the river Alpheus, by the most probable account 884 B.C. The vulgar era of the Olympiads however, did not commence till 108 years later, July 19, 776 B.C., from which time they were regularly continued every four years complete, or fifth year current, and lasted for five days, on each of which were celebrated the different games of leaping, running, wrestling, throwing the discus, and so forth; the last day fell on the full moon of the summer solstice, and the next day the prizes were awarded. The other games of Greece were the Pythian, Isthmian, and Nemean; they acquired considerable importance, but never arrived at the splendour of the Olympic. They were also held at intervals of four years, each taking its year between those of the Olympic; so that every summer there was a festival common to the Greek people, with an armistice enabling all who desired to attend. The Olympiad then, that in which Coræbus won, is of universally acknowledged date 776 years before the Christian era; on this point all chronologists agree, consequently it becomes the fixed authentic period of Greek, or rather of profane history.

CHAPTER VI.

POETRY OF GREECE

OF GREATER ANTIQUITY THAN PROSE COMPOSITION—ITS DIFFERENT SPECIES—COMPARISON BETWEEN ANCIENT AND MODERN POETRY—GREEK POETS—HOMER, HESIOD, ARCHILOCHUS, SAPPHO, ALCÆUS, SIMONIDES, ANACREON, PINDAR, AND THEOCRITUS—ILLUSTRATIONS—THE SCOLIA OF THE GREEK POETS.

In all nations, the southern as well as the northern, poetical writing has taken the precedence of prose composition; imagination appearing to have been everywhere a faculty earlier developed than reason. According to the remains of

Greek poetry now extant, we are led to suppose that the Lyric was not followed, but preceded by the Epic, a circumstance of which no example can be adduced in any other country where poetry was indigenous. The names however of Amphion, Linus, Musæus, and Orpheus, contradict this opinion; and though their writings are no longer in existence, their reputations assure us, that in Greece, as elsewhere, Lyric poetry had priority of every other metrical composition. The scalds or bards of no country enjoyed a more happy existence than those of the Greeks; when they travelled they were everywhere welcome, as their song could enliven the public festival, or give solemnity to the ceremonies of religion; they could dwell in the midst of danger, and behold in safety the tumult of battle; in every situation they were respected; and having contemplated the passions and contests of men, could retire to the cavern, and compose the songs which were to instruct and charm. The greatest heroes did not disdain the lyre; and the most distinguished performers rose to high honours. Achilles sung the glory of departed warriors now forgotten; Amphion reigned in the city, whose walls his music and his verse helped to raise; Orpheus was said to have obtained admission into the palace of Pluto; Anaxagoras¹ bestowed a part of the kingdom of Argos on the poet and physician Melampus, whose descendants reigned there to the sixth generation. The brilliant age of Lyric poetry however, as now remembered, succeeded the age of Homer by nearly three centuries, and continued about two hundred years; it was filled by the successive production of many poets, among whom the names of Sappho, Alcæus, Anacreon, and Pindar, will ever be remembered with admiration.

Homer flourished about 907 B. C.

The precise period when this great man lived, the father of profane poetry, is involved in some obscu-

¹ Not of Clazomene.


city ; uncertainty also prevails concerning the place of his nativity, no less than seven illustrious cities having disputed the right to the honour of being his birth-place, explained in these lines :—

“ Smyrna, Chios, Colophon, Salamis,
Rhodos, Argos, Athenæ,
Orbis de patria certat, Homere, tua.”

It is believed that he was born among the Ionians of Asia Minor, about 950 years before the Christian era ; although Herodotus, Aristotle, and Plutarch wrote of him, they were not able to fix the above points with certainty. Homer appears to have followed the profession of a wandering minstrel, and to have composed his poems in detached pieces, separate ballads, and episodes. His two celebrated poems are the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* : in the former, he gives an account of the last year's siege of Troy, the resentment of Achilles, and its fatal consequences ; in the latter, he relates the adventures and return of Ulysses to his own country, with the numerous misfortunes which attended his voyage. His works are characterized by all the features of an early age ; they are replete with imagery taken from the common objects of nature ; they abound in strong expressions, and paint in simplicity and without disguise, the emotions of the mind, presenting a faithful living picture of their own times ; they are inventive beyond the productions of almost any other poet, and conducted with a degree of judgment which has never been surpassed. If there be any defect found in his poetry, it must be attributed to the age in which he lived, human qualities not having reached their full development. The combinations of thought and feeling which he did not see, he could not describe, and it has not inaptly been observed, that whilst the early writers are in possession of nature, their followers are in possession of art ; the former excelling in strength and invention, the latter in copiousness and refinement.

The distinguishing merits of Homer are, his perfect knowledge of human nature, his skill in delineating manners and characters; nothing can be more intimate than the acquaintance to which he introduces his readers, with all the customs of antiquity. As far as the condition of men in his time allowed him to penetrate, his personages are complete; Achilles, Hector, Ajax, Paris, Agamemnon, Menelaus, Helen, and Andromache are as they ought to be, individually distinct and separated by their own appropriate feelings, from the outset of their existence to the end. Homer, the most ancient of poets, may also be called the most accomplished; he is correct not merely in his perceptions, in the power of fancy, in the observation of what he beheld, he is also admirable for the manner in which he combines his story, and maintains his characters. He is the poet of all time; his genius for the sublime and beautiful, with the harmony of his poetical numbers, and the fine strain of moral sentiment which breathes throughout the whole, has made the *Iliad* a standard to which all similar compositions have been referred, and from which the laws of the *Epopœa* have been derived. It is to the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* that we are indebted for the next finest poem of antiquity, or one standing in rivalry with them, the *Æneid* of Virgil; the voyage of Ulysses having served as a model for that of *Æneas*, whilst his battles were taken from the animated descriptions of the *Iliad*. These splendid poems have been a universal fountain, to which the greatest writers of ancient and modern times are indebted for some of their finest sentiments; Virgil, Tasso, Milton, and others, copied from them.

The fidelity of Homer as a historian has been called in question; the great outlines of his narrative, however, are undoubtedly true; and the accuracy of his statements was acknowledged by the Greeks themselves to be such, that different states referred to his works to settle disputes about



territory, and to ascertain their rights of dominion. Longinus,¹ the most refined of critics, compares the Iliad to the mid-day, and the Odyssey to the setting sun, observing that the latter still preserves its original splendour and majesty, though deprived of its meridian heat. The poetry of Homer was so universally admired, that in ancient times every man of learning could repeat many passages in the Iliad and Odyssey; and modern travellers are astonished to see the different scenes, which the pen of Homer described 2750 years back, still existing in the same unvaried form; whilst the mariner, who steers his course along the Ægean, or Archipelago, has a view of all the promontories and rocks which appeared to Nestor and Menelaus when they returned victoriously from the Trojan war. Other writings of Homer still extant are his *Batrachomyomachia*, or battle of the frogs and mice, with some hymns and epigrams. In his old age he became blind, and settled at Chios, as he tells us in his hymn to Apollo, where he calls himself

“The sightless man
Of stony Chios.”

It is said, that in the latter part of his life he established a school; and it was the pride and pleasure of the inhabitants of that island, to point out to strangers the spot occupied by the venerable master and his pupils, about four miles from the modern capital.

*Illustrations.*²

Hector, on taking a tender leave of his wife Andromache, extends his arms to embrace his child, who affrighted at the

¹ This celebrated philosopher was sacrificed to the fury of the Roman soldiers, when the Emperor Aurelian entered victoriously the gates of Palmyra, A. D. 273.

² The author considers it more desirable, that he should carefully select his illustrations from the best English translations, rather than attempt to bring forward his own; he will therefore give the preference to those authors who have not merely interpreted to the letter, but who have also entered into the spirit of ancient poetry.

glittering of his helmet, and the shaking of his plume, shrinks backward to the breast of his nurse. Hector unbraces his helmet, lays it on the ground, takes the infant in his arms, lifts him towards heaven, and offers a prayer for him: then returns him to his mother Andromache, who receives him with a smile of pleasure, but at the same instant the fears for her husband make her burst into tears. It is difficult to imagine a finer piece of painting than is contained in the following lines:—

Thus having spoke, th' illustrious chief of Troy,
Stretch'd his fond arms to clasp the lovely boy.
The babe clung crying to his nurse's breast,
Scar'd at the dazzling helm, and nodding crest.
With secret pleasure each fond parent smil'd,
And Hector hasted to relieve his child;
The glitt'ring terrors from his brows unbound,
And placed the beaming helmet on the ground.
Then kist the child, and lifting high in air,
Thus to the Gods preferr'd a father's prayer.

Comparisons.

In these the richness and fertility of Homer's imagination appear to great advantage; his simile of Paris to a courser is a celebrated one.

The wanton courser thus, with reins unbound,
Breaks from his stall, and beats the trembling ground;
Pamper'd and proud, he seeks the wonted tides,
And laves in height of blood, his shining sides:
His head now freed, he tosses to the skies;
His mane dishevell'd o'er his shoulders flies;
He snuffs the females in the distant plain,
And springs, exulting to his fields again.
With equal triumph, sprightly, bold, and gay,
In arms refulgent as the god of day,
The son of Priam, glorying in his might,
Rush'd forth with Hector to the fields of fight.

It appears to have been a frequent opinion, not only among the oriental nations, but also with the ancient Greeks and Romans, that the inferior animals were at times gifted with the power of speech. In the Arabian Nights' Entertainments, such an occurrence is frequently put forth: Achilles in his grief reproaching his horses for the death of Patroclus, one of them is stated to have been miraculously endowed with voice, and inspired to prophesy his fate. Livy makes mention of two oxen that spoke on different occasions, and recites the speech of one of them, which was *Roma cave tibi*. Pliny tells us¹ these animals were particularly gifted in this way. The lower animals in modern days, do not favour us either with conversation or prophecy, they seem to have become more modest.

Achilles mounts, and sets the field on fire;
 Not brighter, Phœbus in th' ethereal way
 Flames from his chariot, and restores the day.
 High o'er the host, all terrible he stands,
 And thunders to his steeds these dread commands—
 ' Xanthus and Balius, of Podarges' strain,
 ' (Unless ye boast that heav'nly race in vain)
 ' Be swift, be mindful of the load ye bear,
 ' And learn to make your master more your care:
 ' Thro' falling squadrons bear my slaught'ring sword,
 ' Nor as ye left Patroclus, leave your Lord.'
 The gen'rous Xanthus, as the words he said,
 Seem'd sensible of woe, and droop'd his head:
 Trembling he stood before the golden wain,
 And bow'd to dust the honours of his mane;
 When strange to tell! (so Juno will'd) he broke
 Eternal silence, and portentous spoke.
 ' Achilles! yes! this day at least we bear
 Thy rage in safety thro' the files of war:

¹ Lib. viii. c. 45. "Est frequens in prodigiis priscorum bovem locutum."

‘ But come it will, the fatal time must come,
‘ Not ours the fault, but God decrees thy doom.
‘ Not thro’ our crime, or slowness in the course,
‘ Fell thy Patroclus, but by heav’nly force.
‘ The bright far-shooting God who gilds the day,
‘ (Confest we saw him) tore his arms away.
‘ No—could our swiftmess o’er the winds prevail,
‘ Or beat the pinions of the western gale,
‘ All were in vain—the fates thy death demand,
‘ Due to a mortal and immortal hand.’

The poems of Homer supply us with excellent models in every kind of eloquence. The speech of Priam to Achilles, when he demands from him the body of his son, is full of beauty and pathos. In reading it, we must call to mind the character of Achilles, rough, violent, and inflexible; still he was a son, and had a father, the only point on which his heart could be softened. Priam having entered the tent of Achilles, throws himself upon his knees, and kisses the hands that had slain so many of his children. Achilles is much surprised at so sudden a spectacle, all around are seized with astonishment, and keep silence; at last Priam speaks,

‘ Ah think, thou favoured of the powers divine!
Think of thy father’s age, and pity mine:
In me that father’s rev’rend image trace,
Those silver hairs, that venerable face;
His trembling limbs, his helpless person see,
In all my equal, but in misery!
Yet now, perhaps, some turn of human fate
Expels him helpless from his peaceful state:
Think from some pow’rful foe thou seest him fly,
And beg protection with a feeble cry.
Yet still one comfort in his soul may rise;
He hears his son still lives to glad his eyes;
And hearing still may hope a better day
May send him thee to chase that foe away.

No comfort to my griefs, no hopes remain,
 The best, the bravest of my sons is slain !
 Yet what a race? ere Greece to Ilion came,
 The pledge of many a lov'd and loving dame.
 Nineteen one mother bore—dead, all are dead !
 How oft, alas ! has wretched Priam bled ?
 Still one was left their loss to recompense—
 His father's hope, his country's last defence.
 Him too thy rage has slain ! beneath thy steel
 Unhappy, in his country's cause he fell !
 For him, through hostile camps I bent my way,
 For him thus prostrate at thy feet I lay ;
 Large gifts proportion'd to thy wrath I bear.
 Oh hear the wretched, and the gods revere !
 Think of thy father, and this face behold !
 See him in me, as helpless and as old !
 Tho' not so wretched :—there, he yields to me,
 The first of men in sov'reign misery.
 Thus forced to kneel, thus grov'ling to embrace
 The scourge and ruin of my realm and race ;
 Suppliant my children's murderer to implore,
 And kiss those hands yet reeking with their gore.'

Stern as Achilles was, he could not resist so pathetic an appeal ; the gentle nature of the father drew tears from his eyes ; he raised Priam with tenderness, and appeared to bear a part in his sorrows ; they both burst into floods of grief, the one for the loss of Hector, the other in remembrance of Patroclus ; and the body of the former was restored with respect to his sorrowing parent.

Hesiod flourished about 876 B. C.

This poet was a native of Bæotia ; there is considerable uncertainty regarding the precise period in which he lived ; some ancient authors assert that he was a contemporary with Homer, others that he flourished about a hundred years after him ; the above era appears to be more nearly correct. Hesiod

is the first who wrote a poem on agriculture; this composition is called 'The Works and the Days.' Besides the instructions which are given to the cultivator of the ground, there are many moral instructions added, worthy of a more refined age than the one in which he lived. The Theogony of Hesiod is a narrative executed without much taste or judgment, and chiefly valuable for the faithful account it gives of the Gods of antiquity. His 'Shield of Hercules,' is a fragment of a large poem, in which it is supposed that he gave an account of the most celebrated heroines among the Greeks, in very early times. Besides the above, he wrote other poems which are lost. Without pretensions to the sublimity and talent of Homer, Hesiod was admired for the sweetness of his poetry, and the propriety of his diction: Virgil in his Georgics has imitated him, acknowledging that he took 'The Opera and Dies' for his model. Cicero speaks highly of him; and the Greeks were so partial to his works, that they were in the habit of making their children learn his moral instructions by heart. He is said to have met with a sudden death through violence.

On Agriculture.

A home, and yoke of oxen, first provide,
 A maid to guard your herds, and then a bride;
 The house be furnish'd, as thy need demands,
 Nor want to borrow from a neighbour's hand.
 While to support your wants abroad you roam,
 Time glides away, and work stands still at home.
 Your bus'ness ne'er defer from day to day,
 Sorrows and poverty attend delay;
 But lo! the careful man shall always find
 Increase of wealth according to his mind.

Yoke from the herd two sturdy males, whose age
 Mature secures them from each other's rage;
 For if too young they will unruly grow,
 Unfinish'd leave the work, and break the plough:

These, and your labour shall the better thrive,
 Let a good ploughman, year'd to forty, drive,
 And see the careful husbandman be fed,
 With plenteous morsels, and of wholesome bread :
 The slave, who numbers fewer days, you'll find
 Careless of work, and of a rambling mind.
 Perhaps, neglectful to direct the plough,
 He in one furrow twice the seed will sow.

Let unimprov'd no hour, in season, fly,
 But with your servants plough, or wet, or dry ;
 And in the spring again to turn the soil
 Observe ; the summer shall reward your toil.
 While light and fresh the glebe insert the grain,
 Then shall your children smile, nor you complain.

Moral Maxims.

To all a love for love return : contend
 In virtuous arts to emulate your friend,
 Be to the good thy favours unconfin'd ;
 Neglect a sordid and ungrateful mind.
 From all the gen'rous a respect command,
 While none regard the base ungiving hand :


How sweet at home to have what life demands,
 The just reward of our industrious hands,
 To view our neighbour's bliss without desire,
 To dread not famine, with her aspect dire !
 Be these thy thoughts, to these thy heart incline,
 And lo ! these blessings shall be surely thine.

When at your board your faithful friend you greet,
 Without reserve, and lib'ral, be the treat :
 To stint the wine, a frugal husband shows,
 When from the middle of the cask it flows.

Do not, by mirth betray'd, your brother trust,
Without a witness, he may prove unjust :
Alike it is unsafe for men to be,
With some too diffident, with some too free.

Next to my counsels an attention pay,
To form your judgment for the nuptial day.
When you have number'd thrice ten years in time,
The age mature when manhood dates his prime,
With caution choose the partner of your bed :
Whom fifteen springs have crown'd, a virgin wed.
Let prudence now direct your choice ; a wife
Is, or a blessing, or a curse in life ;
Her father, mother know, relations, friends :
If all are good, accept the maiden bride ;
Then form her manners, and her actions guide :
A life of bliss succeeds the happy choice ;
Nor shall your friends lament, nor foes rejoice.
Wretched the man condemn'd to drag the chain,
What restless ev'nings his, what days of pain !
Of a luxurious mate, a wanton dame,
That ever burns with an insatiate flame ;
A wife who seeks to revel out the nights
In sumptuous banquets, and stol'n delights.
Ah ! wretched mortal, though in body strong,
Thy constitution cannot serve thee long ;
Old age, vexations shall o'ertake thee soon ;
Thine is the ev'n of life before the noon.

When you behold a man by fortune poor,
Let him not leave with sharp rebukes the door ;
The treasure of the tongue in every cause
With moderation us'd obtains applause ;
What of another you severely say
May amply be return'd another day.



Archilochus flourished about 688 B. C.

He was born at Paros, and descended from one of the noblest families in that island; at twenty years of age he emigrated to Thasos, with a colony of his countrymen, an event mentioned by Herodotus. Archilochus is among the first on the list of soldier-poets; and in the course of his military career, an accident happened to him in the loss of his shield, which exposed him to the sarcasm of some of his contemporaries, and which forms the subject of one of his fragments. His courtship with Neobule, the daughter of Lycambes, broken off by the avarice of her father, after he had received promises of marriage, has been rendered memorable by the strange and incredible story attached to it, of poetical vengeance, with its fatal consequences, namely, that her father hanged himself in a fit of despair at the bitter satire Archilochus wrote upon him for his breach of faith. This poet was the founder of the Iambic verse; he was the author of elegies, odes, epigrams, and satires, the last said to have been so virulent as to cause his banishment; of this, however, we have no proof, and in the few fragments of his writings which remain, there is little or nothing to justify such an assertion. In regard to Neobule, there is only a single line¹ containing any clear reference to the subject, and that not the exclamation of a harsh satirist, but of a tender and passionate lover. Archilochus suffered much through life from poverty and misfortune; he was at last killed by banditti. His works are mentioned as extant in the time of Augustus, and Horace made them the subject of his study and imitation.

A Moral.

Soul! O soul! when round thee whelming
cares like mountain surges close,
Patient bear their mighty rage, and
with thy strength their strength oppose.

¹ Εἰ γὰρ ὡς ἐμοὶ γένοιτο χεῖρα Νεοβουλῆς θίγειν.

Be a manly breast your bulwark,
 your defence firm-planted feet ;
 So the serried line of hostile
 spears with calm composure meet.

Yet in vict'ry's golden hour,
 raise not your proud vaunts too high ;
 Nor, if vanquish'd, meanly stooping
 pierce with loud lament the sky :
 But in prosp'rous fortune so re-
 joice, and in reverses mourn,
 As well knowing what is destin'd
 for the race of woman born.

Leave the gods to order all things ;
 often from the gulf of woe
 They exalt the poor man grov'ling
 in the gloomy shades below ;
 Often turn again, and prostrate
 lay in dust the loftiest head,
 Dooming him thro' life to wander,
 reft of sense, and wanting bread.

From an Elegy on a Shipwreck.

Loud are our griefs, my friend ; and vain is he
 Would steep the sense in mirth and revelry.
 O'er those we mourn the hoarse-resounding wave
 Hath clos'd, and whelm'd them in their ocean grave.
 Deep sorrow swells each breast. But heaven bestows
 One healing med'cine for severest woes,
 Resolv'd endurance ; for affliction pours
 To all by turns, to-day the cup is ours.
 Bear bravely then the common trial sent,
 And cast away your womanish lament !
 Ah ! had it been the will of heav'n to save
 His honoured relics from a nameless grave !

Had we but seen th' accustom'd flames aspire,
 And wrap his corse in purifying fire !
 Yet what avails it to lament the dead ?
 Say, will it profit aught to shroud our head,
 And wear away in grief the fleeting hours,
 Rather than 'mid bright nymphs in rosy bowers ?

On the Loss of his Shield.

The foe-man glories in my shield
 I left it on the battle-field ;
 I threw it down beside the wood,
 Unscath'd by scars, unstain'd with blood.
 And let him glory ! since, from death
 Escap'd, I keep my forfeit breath,
 I soon may find, at little cost,
 As good a shield as that I've lost.

Convivial.

Come then, my friend, and seize the flask,
 And while the deck around us rolls,
 Dash we the cover from the cask,
 And crown with wine our flowing bowls.
 While the deep hold is tempest tost,
 We'll strain bright nectar from the lees :
 For though our freedom here be lost,
 We drink no water on the seas.

On Riches and Power.

For Gyges' wealth let others care,
 Gold is nothing to me,
 Envy of another's share
 Never shall undo me.
 Nothing that the gods decree
 Moves my special wonder ;
 And as for boastful tyranny
 We're too far asunder.

Sappho flourished 600 B. C.

This poetess, who from the elegance of her verses was called the tenth¹ muse, was born in the island of Lesbos; she married one Cercolas, a person of power and wealth in the island of Andros, by whom she had a daughter named Cleis; she became a widow however when very young, and from feelings which so frequently attend transcendent genius, her life was embittered, and her death premature. She had conceived a passion for Phaon of Mitylene, one of the handsomest young men of his day, and meeting with neglect she fell into a state of despair. There was a promontory in Acarnania, called Leucate, on the top of which stood a little temple dedicated to Apollo, in which despairing lovers made their vows, and afterwards threw themselves from the precipice into the sea; for it was an established opinion, that all who were taken up alive would immediately be cured of their former passion. Sappho tried the remedy, and perished in the experiment; or in other words, she took the lover's leap, and was drowned. She composed nine books of lyric poetry, besides epigrams and elegies, which were extant in the days of Horace; she also gave her name to the Sapphic verse: of her writings, we have still two exquisite odes and a fragment. The Lesbians were so sensible of her merit, that after her death they paid her divine honours, raised temples to her memory, and stamped their money with her image.

ODE I.

Sappho's Hymn to Venus.

We are indebted for this hymn to Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who quotes it as a pattern of perfection.

Oh Venus, beauty of the skies,
To whom a thousand temples rise,

¹ The muses were nine in number, and usually represented as young, beautiful, and modest virgins; the ancients believed them to be the daughters of Jupiter, the king of the gods, and Mnemo-

Gaily false in gentle smiles,
 Full of love perplexing wiles:
 Oh goddess! from my heart remove
 The wasting cares, and pains of love.

If ever thou hast kindly heard
 A song in soft distress preferr'd,
 Propitious to my tuneful vow,
 Oh, gentle goddess! hear one now;
 Descend, thou bright immortal guest,
 In all thy radiant charms confest.

Thou once didst leave almighty Jove,
 And all the golden roofs above,
 The car thy wanton sparrows drew;
 Hovering in air they lightly flew:
 As to my bower they wing'd their way,
 I saw their quivering pinions play.

The birds dismiss (while you remain)
 Bore back their empty car again:
 Then you with looks divinely mild,
 In every heav'nly feature smil'd,
 And ask'd what new complaints I made,
 And why I call'd you to my aid?

' What phrensy in my bosom rag'd,
 ' And by what cure to be assuag'd;
 ' What gentle youth I would allure,
 ' Whom in my artful toils secure;
 ' Who does thy tender heart subdue—
 ' Tell me, my Sappho, tell me who?

' Tho' now he shun thy longing arms,
 ' He soon shall court thy slighted charms:

syne. Their names were Clio, Euterpe, Thalia, Melpomene, Terpsichore, Erato, Polyhymnia, Calliope, and Urania; they presided over poetry, music, history, eloquence, and all the liberal arts.

'Tho' now thy offerings he despise,
 'He soon to thee shall sacrifice :
 'Tho' now he freeze, he soon shall burn,
 'And be thy victim in his turn.'

Celestial visitant, once more
 Thy needful presence I implore !
 In pity come and ease my grief,
 Bring my distemper'd soul relief ;
 Favour thy suppliant's hidden fires,
 And give me all my heart desires.

ODE II.

A Lover Sitting by his Mistress.

This beautiful ode is preserved by Longinus in his
Treatise on the Sublime, and he has borne ample testimony
 to its exactness as a description of the warmest feelings in
 the passion of love, which Sappho experienced in all their
 acuteness.

Blest as the immortal Gods is he,
 The youth who fondly sits by thee,
 And hears and sees thee all the while,
 Softly speak, and sweetly smile.

'Twas this depriv'd my soul of rest,
 And rais'd such tumults in my breast ;
 For while I gaz'd, in transport tost,
 My breath was gone, my voice was lost :

My bosom glow'd, the subtle flame
 Ran quick through all my vital frame ;
 O'er my dim eyes a darkness hung ;
 My ears with hollow murmurs rung.

In dewy damps my limbs were chill'd ;
 My blood with gentle horrors thrill'd ;
 My feeble pulse forgot to play ;
 I fainted, sunk, and died away.

A Fragment.

The following lines were addressed to an arrogant illiterate woman, vain of her beauty and riches.

Unknown, unheeded, shalt thou die,
And no memorial shall proclaim
That once beneath the upper sky,
Thou hadst a being and a name!¹

For never to the muse's bowers,
Didst thou with glowing heart repair,
Nor ever intertwine the flowers
That fancy strews unnumber'd there.

Doom'd o'er that dreary realm, alone,
Shunn'd by the gentler shades to go,
Nor friend shall soothe, nor parent own
The child of sloth, the muse's foe.

Alcæus flourished 600 B.C.

He was a native of Mytilene, in Lesbos, and contemporary with Sappho, to whom he paid his addresses. Like Archilochus he united in his person the military and poetical character, and which is rather remarkable, he was also celebrated for having saved his life with the loss of his shield; this misfortune occurred in a battle with the Athenians, and such was the reputation he then enjoyed, that the victors triumphantly suspended the trophy in the temple

¹ Sappho is not the only good writer, who from a due sense of the excellence of their works, have promised themselves immortality. Homer has done so with perfect truth and justice in his Hymn to Apollo. Virgil has so expressed himself, at the beginning of the 3rd Georgic. Ovid in the strongest terms, and Horace in several places, particularly in the ode, "Exegi monumentum.

Iamque opus exegi," &c.

"I've now compiled a work, which nor the rage of Jove, nor fire, nor sword, nor eating age is able to destroy."

of Minerva, while the poet consoled himself for the disgrace by commemorating it in the following words :—

Ἄλκαῖος σῆος, ἀφ' οἱ ἐνταῖα δ' οὐχ
 ' Alcæus is safe, tho' his arms are lost.'

The name of Alcæus is imperishably associated with that stern and unrelenting spirit of enmity to monarchical government, by which the cities and islands of Greece had begun to be distinguished, and this sentiment became his most striking characteristic; it is probable that it gave rise, by a strange anachronism, to the hymn in praise of Harmodius and Aristogeiton for killing Hipparchus, the tyrant of Athens, being ascribed to him, although he flourished eighty years before the event it records. As a poet he has been commended by the ancients for a union of magnificence with brevity, sweetness with strength of expression, the use of metaphor with perspicuity; and in the few fragments that have reached us, there is enough to justify the high praise which antiquity bestowed upon him. It was on a relique of Alcæus, that Sir William Jones founded his noble paraphrase, "What constitutes a State?"¹

The Storm.

Now here, now there, the wild waves sweep,
 Whilst we betwixt them o'er the deep,

¹ 'What constitutes a State?
 Not high rais'd battlement, or labour'd mound,
 Thick wall, or moated gate:
 Not cities fair with spires and turrets crown'd.
 No: men—high-minded men—
 With powers as far above dull brutes endued
 In forest, brake, or den,
 As beasts excel cold rocks and brambles rude.
 Men, who their duties know,
 Know too their rights, and knowing, dare maintain.'

* * *

In shatter'd tempest—beaten bark,
 With labouring ropes are onward driven.
 The billows dashing o'er our dark
 Upheaved deck—in tatters riven
 Our sails—whose yawning rents between
 The raging sea and sky are seen.

Loose from their hold our anchors burst;
 And then the third, the fatal wave
 Comes rolling onward, like the first,
 And doubles all our toil to save.

Convivial.

Jove descends in sleet and snow,
 Howls the vex'd and angry deep;
 Every stream forgets to flow,
 Bound in winter's icy sleep.
 Ocean wave and forest hoar
 To the blast responsive roar.

Drive the tempest from your door,
 Blaze on blaze your hearthstone piling,
 And unmeasur'd goblets pour
 Brimful high with nectar smiling.
 Then beneath your poet's head
 Be a downy pillow spread.

The Spoils of War.

Glitters with brass my mansion wide;
 The roof is deck'd on every side
 In martial pride,
 With helmets rang'd in order bright,
 And plumes of horse-hair nodding white,
 A gallant sight.

Fit ornaments for warriors' brow—
 And round the walls in goodly row,
 Refulgent glow

Stout greaves of brass like burnish'd gold,
And corselets there, in many a fold
Of linen roll'd;

And shields that in the battle fray
The routed losers of the day
Have cast away;
Eubœan faulchions too are seen,
With rich embroider'd belts between
Of dazzling sheen;

And gaudy surcoats pil'd around,
The spoils of chiefs in war renown'd,
May there be found—
These, and all else that here you see,
Are fruits of glorious victory
Achieved by me.¹

Convivial.

Glad your hearts with rosy wine,
Now the dog-star takes his round;
Sultry hours to sleep incline,
Gapes with heat the thirsty ground.

Crickets sing on leafy boughs,
And the thistle is in flower;
Melting maids forget the vows
Made to th' moon in colder hours.

Why wait we for torches' lights?
Now let us drink—the day invites.

¹ If this be correct, we may conclude that Alcæus was not in the habit of losing his shield; at the same time the turn which has been given to the concluding lines, making the above a description of the poet's own house, is scarcely warranted by the original.

In mighty flagons hither bring
 The deep red blood of many a vine,
 That we may largely quaff, and sing
 The praises of the god of wine—

The son of Jove and Semele,
 Who gave the jocund grape to be
 A sweet oblivion of our woes.
 Fill, fill the goblets—one and two;
 Let every brimmer, as it flows,
 In sportive chase the last pursue !

Simonides flourished 535 B.C.

This poet was born in the Island of Cos, 556 years before the Christian era. It is to him that the honour has been given of having completed the Greek alphabet by the addition of four letters, see page 57; he was also looked up to as the great metrical historian of his country. While Greece was in her infancy, her epigrams, or inscriptions, were almost the only records of events, and memorials of the dead: to their testimony Herodotus and Thucydides recur, and these are followed by Diodorus and Plutarch, all of whom appeal to them, as a sure and undisputed authority; a trophy was seldom erected, or a city depressed by the vicissitudes of fortune, without some epigram recording the event, and the causes which led to it. Thus the history of an epoch was sometimes couched in a few disticha, which were remembered and referred to without trouble. Simonides in particular claims our attention as the chief of epigrammatic poets; his lines on the Greek heroes who fell at Thermopylæ are preserved to us by Herodotus. The valour of the people of Tegea in defending themselves against the Spartans, is celebrated in four lines. On a Corinthian monument were four lines, inscribed by him to the men of Corinth, who fell at Salamis. To this poet is attributed the invention, or more properly


the establishment of the elegy, in its last received sense of a funeral poem; we have still a number of his epigrams, but only a few lines of what can be correctly called his elegies. Among his works are mentioned two epic poems, one on Cambyses king of Persia, the other on the battle of Salamis between Xerxes and the Greeks; dramatical pieces, epigrams, and elegies — of which the fragments handed down to us consist only of the two latter, distinguished by strength and simplicity: it is with respect to the writings of this age, that the lovers of the antique muse of Greece, have the heaviest losses to deplore; time and barbarism have here swept away more than their usual share of the great and beautiful, and when we see what is now left to us of the mightiest poets of this period, our hearts fill with sorrow, which even the shattered temples of Athens itself, cannot more worthily call up, than the mournful exhibition of the torsos of Archilochus, Sappho, Alcæus, and Simonides.

There were three poets who bore the name of Simonides; the first was a native of the Island of Amorgos, contemporary with Archilochus, and the author of a long set of Iambic verses, on the character of women. The second and greatest of the name, whose writings are now particularly mentioned, had a nephew who appears to possess the best title to such of the epigrams, as from the date of the events recorded in them, cannot without an anachronism, be ascribed to his uncle. The character of Simonides was pure and amiable, although tinged with a shade of melancholy, so frequently a feature in the best, the noblest, and the most talented of our race.

“*Mœstius lacrymis Simonideis.*”

CATULLUS.

After having been universally esteemed and courted by the princes of Greece and Sicily, Simonides died 467 B. C. in the 89th year of his age.



Fragment of an Elegy on the Uncertainty of Life.

All human things are subject to decay ;
 And well the man of Chios tun'd his lay,—
 ' Like leaves on trees the race of man is found,
 Yet few receive the melancholy sound,
 Or in their breast imprint this solemn truth ;
 For hope is near to all, but most to youth.
 Hope's vernal season leads the laughing hours,
 And strews o'er every path the fairest flowers :
 To cloud the scene no distant mists appear,
 Age moves no thought, and death awakes no fear.
 Ah, how unmindful is the giddy crowd
 Of the small span to youth and life allow'd !
 Ye who reflect, the short-liv'd good employ,
 And while the power remains, indulge your joy.'

The Complaint of Danae.

When the wind resounding high,
 Bluster'd from the northern sky,
 When the waves, in stronger tide,
 Dash'd against the vessel's side ;
 Her care-worn cheek with tears bedew'd,
 Her sleeping infant Danae view'd ;
 And trembling still with new alarms,
 Around him cast a mother's arms.
 ' My child ! what woes does Danae weep,'
 But thy young limbs are wrapt in sleep.
 In that poor nook, all sad and dark,
 While lightnings play around our bark.
 Thy quiet bosom only knows
 The heavy sigh of deep repose.

The howling wind, the raging sea,
 No terror can excite in thee ;
 The angry surges wake no care,
 That burst above thy long deep hair,
 But couldst thou feel what I deplore,
 Then would I bid thee sleep no more.

Sleep on, sweet boy, still be the deep!
 Oh could I lull my woes to sleep!
 Jove, let thy mighty hand o'erthrow
 The baffled malice of my foe;
 And may this child, in future years,
 Avenge his mother's wrongs and tears.

On the Greeks who fell at Thermopylæ.

In dark Thermopylæ they lie;
 Oh death of glory, there to die!
 Their tomb an altar is, their name
 A mighty heritage of fame:
 Their dirge is triumph-cankering rust,
 And time that turneth all to dust,
 That tomb shall never waste nor hide,
 The tomb of warriors true and tried.
 The full-voic'd praise of Greece around
 Lies buried in that sacred mound,
 Where Sparta's king, Leonidas,
 In death eternal glory has.

On a Column at Thermopylæ.

Stranger! to Sparta say, her faithful band,
 Here lie in death, remembering her command.

On the Men of Tegea.

'Twas by their valour that to heav'n ascended,
 No curling smoke from Tegea's ravag'd field,
 Who chose—so as the town their arms defended,
 They to their sons a heritage might yield;
 Inscrib'd with freedom's ever-blooming name—
 Themselves to perish in the ranks of fame.

On the Death of Hipparchus.

Fair was the light, that brighten'd as it grew,
 Of freedom on Athena's favour'd land,
 When him, the tyrant, bold Harmodius slew,
 Link'd with Aristogeiton, hand in hand.

On the Corinthians, who fell at Salamis.

We dwelt of yore in Corinth, by the deep
 In Salamis (Agacian Isle) we sleep.
 The ships of Tyre we routed on the sea,
 And Persia,—warring holy Greece! for thee.

On Cimon's Naval Victory.

Ne'er since that olden time when Asia stood
 First torn from Europe by the ocean flood,
 Since horrid Mars first pour'd on either shore
 The storm of battle, and its wild uproar,
 Hath man by land and sea such glory won
 As for the mighty deed this day was done.
 By land the Medes in myriads press the ground;
 By sea, a hundred Tyrian ships are drown'd,
 With all their martial host; while Asia stands
 Deep groaning by, and wrings her helpless hands.

BY SIMONIDES, THE YOUNGER.

*On the Athenians, who fell at the commencement of the
Peloponnesian War.*

Hail, great in war! all hail, by glory cherish'd!
 Athena's sons, in chivalry renown'd!
 For your sweet native soil in youth ye perish'd,
 When Hellas leagu'd in hostile ranks was found.

On Anacreon.

Behold where Teos shrouds her minstrel son,
 The deathless bard, the lost Anacreon!
 Whose raptur'd numbers, wing'd with soft desire,
 Did all the Graces, all the Loves inspire.
 For this alone he grieves within the grave;
 Not that the sun is dark on Lethe's wave,
 But that Megiste's eyes he may not see,
 Nor, Thressa, still look wistfully on thee.

Still he remembers music's honey'd breath;
Still wakes the lyre beneath the house of death.

On a Female Victor at the Olympic Games.

My sire, my brethren Sparta's princes are;
Mine were the coursers, mine the conq'ring car:
Twas I, Cynisca, I that rais'd this stone,
I won the wreath, 'mid Grecian maids alone.

On a Statue of Cupid by Praxiteles.

Well has the sculptor what he felt express'd,
He drew the living model from his breast.
Will not his Phryne the design approve,
Me for myself exchanging, love for love?
Lost is my fabled bow and magic dart;
But, only gazed upon, I win the heart.


Anacreon flourished 533 B. C.

He was born at Teos, a sea-port town in Ionia, 554 years before the Christian era; according to Plato he was descended of an illustrious family, that of Codrus, the last king of Athens. Anacreon and Pindar have been considered by some as the fathers of lyric poetry, the works of the former however, are a great contrast to those of the latter; the fancy of the first suggests only familiar and luxurious images; Anacreon appears to have no comprehension of the sublime, he contents himself with the easy and the graceful, and was a man of voluptuous habits, and lax morality. His odes are still extant, they are distinguished by great beauty and elegance. He died in his 85th year, choked with a grape-stone whilst regaling on some new wine.

ODE I.

On his Lyre.

This ode is with great propriety placed at the head of these beautiful little poems, the argument being in a great



measure that of all the rest, the invention of it has been esteemed so happy, and the turn so delicate, that the best masters of antiquity have copied this excellent original.

Wake, O lyre, thy silent strings,
Celebrate the brother kings,
Sons of Atreus, fam'd afar,
Cadmus, and the Theban war.

Rapt I strike the vocal shell,
Hark,—the trembling chords rebel;
All averse to arms they prove,
Warbling only strains of love.

Late I strung anew my lyre,
Heav'nly muse my breast inspire,
While the swelling notes resound,
Hercules, for toils renown'd.

Still the chords rebellious prove,
Answ'ring only strains of love!
Farewell heroes, farewell kings!
Love alone shall tune my strings.

ODE IV.

On Himself.

Reclin'd at ease on this soft bed
With fragrant leaves¹ of myrtle spread,
And flow'ry lote, I'll now resign
My cares, and quaff the rosy wine.

In decent robe behind him bound,
Cupid shall serve the goblet round:
For fast away our moments steal,
Like the swift chariot's rolling wheel;

¹ It was the custom of the ancients, by way of indulgence, to repose on heaps of fragrant herbs, leaves, and flowers.

The rapid course is quickly done,
 And soon the race of life is run ;
 Then, then, alas ! we droop, we die,
 And sunk in dissolution lie :

Our frame no symmetry retains,
 Nought but a little dust remains :
 Why on the tomb are odours¹ shed ?
 Why pour'd libations to the dead ?

To me, far better, while I live,
 Rich wines, and balmy fragrance give ;
 Now, now, the rosy wreath prepare,
 And hither call the lovely fair.

Now, while I draw my vital breath,
 Ere yet I lead the dance of death,
 For joy my sorrows I'll resign,
 And drown my cares in rosy wine.

ODE XVII.

The Goblet.

I do not want the rolling car,
 Helm, or shield with silver bound,—
 What have I to do with war ?
 But a goblet deep and round.

Carve not on its polish'd side,
 Star nor planet's varied form,
 Those that rule the angry tide,
 Or direct the rising storm.

Let a vine the cup surround,
 Claspings with its tendrils fine,
 And amid the golden ground,
 Raise a vat of new-made wine.

¹ Referring to the practice of the ancients, of pouring sweet ointments on the tombs of the dead, and crowning them with flowers.

Then the festal chorus leading,
Carve the Theban god above ;
And the mellow vintage treading,
Cupid, with the maid I love.

ODE XL.¹*Cupid Wounded.*

Once as cupid, tir'd with play,
On a bed of roses lay,
A rude bee, that slipt unseen,
The sweet-breathing buds between,
Stung his finger, cruel chance !
With its little pointed lance.

Straight he fills the air with cries,
Weeps and sobs, and runs and flies ;
Till the god to Venus came,
Lovely, laughter-loving dame :
Then he thus began to 'plain ;

' Oh ! undone, I die with pain—
Dear mamma, a serpent small,
Which a bee the ploughman call,
Imp'd with wings, and arm'd with dart,
Oh !—has stung me to the heart.'

Venus thus reply'd and smil'd,
' Dry those tears, for shame, my child !
If a bee can wound so deep,
Causing Cupid thus to weep,
Think, O think ! what cruel pains
He that's stung by thee sustains.'

¹ Theocritus has imitated this beautiful ode in his nineteenth Idyllium.

Τὸν κλεπτὰν ποτ' Ἐρώτα, κ. τ. λ.

' As cupid once the slyest rogue alive,
Was stealing fragrant honey from the hive.'

ODE XLVI.

The Power of Gold.

Love's a pain that works our woe;
 Not to love, is painful too:
 But, alas! the greatest pain,
 Waits the love that meets disdain.

What awaits ingenuous worth,
 Sprightly wit, or noble birth?
 All these virtues useless prove,
 Gold alone engages love.

May he be completely curst,
 Who the sleeping mischief first
 Wak'd to life, and vile before,
 Stamp'd with worth the sordid ore.

Gold creates in brethren strife;
 Gold destroys the parent's life;
 Gold produces civil jars,
 Murders, massacres, and wars:
 But, the worst effect of gold,
 Love, alas! is bought and sold.

Pindar flourished 480 B.C.

This celebrated bard was esteemed by the ancients the chief of the Lyric poets; he possesses unbounded fancy, enthusiastic genius, and great sublimity of imagery; but his digressions are so rapid and frequent, he changes so often from the exploits of deceased heroes to those of his own time, that it becomes difficult to discover the chain of thought, and to follow him, from the obscure style of his expressions. Longinus remarks that Pindar's flame is sometimes extinguished, that he now and then sinks unexpectedly and unaccountably; still he prefers him with his faults to one who keeps on in a constant tenor of mediocrity; it must however be admitted, that his precepts are just, and his

sentiments pure. The Greeks had a veneration and esteem for his memory, which we can hardly appreciate in the present day; thus the Spartans, when they destroyed the edifices and walls of Thebes, were careful to spare the house which Pindar had inhabited; and the same respect was afterwards paid by Alexander the Great, when he reduced that city to ashes. The poet was a native of Bœotia, and is said to have died at an extreme old age; the greatest part of his works have perished. We have still extant a book of odes in praise of the victors at the four great festivals of Greece, the Olympic, Pythian, Nemean, and Isthmian games. Pindar's odes are composed to be sung by a chorus, either during the entertainments given by the conquerors, to whom they were inscribed at the games, or at the solemn sacrifices to the gods made on those occasions. They consist generally of three stanzas, two larger and one less; the first of the large the ancients called strophe, singing and dancing at the same time; the second they called antistrophe, in which the dance was inverted; the lesser stanza was named the epode, which they sung standing. The strophe and antistrophe, or first and second verses, always contained the same number, and the same kind of verses. These odes had the aid of musical instruments, the various inflexions of the voice, suitable attitudes, and proper motions of the body.

OLYMPIC, ODE I.

Inscribed to Hiero, king of Syracuse, who in the seventy-third Olympiad obtained the victory in the race of single horses.

STROPHE I.

Chief of nature's works divine,
 Water claims the highest praise:
 Richest offspring of the mine,
 Gold, like fire, whose flashing rays
 From afar conspicuous gleam
 Through the night's involving cloud,

First in lustre and esteem,
 Decks the treasures of the proud :
 So among the lists of fame
 Pisa's¹ honour'd games excel ;
 Then to Pisa's glorious name
 Tune, O muse, thy sounding shell.

ANTISTROPHE I.

Who along the desert air
 Seeks the faded starry train,
 When the sun's meridian car
 Round illumines th' ætherial plain ?
 Who a nobler theme can choose
 Than Olympia's sacred games ?
 What more apt to fire the muse
 When her various songs she frames ?
 Songs in strains of wisdom drest
 Great Saturnius to record,
 And by each rejoicing guest
 Sung at Hiero's feastful board.

EPODE I.

In pastoral Sicilia's fruitful soil,
 The righteous sceptre of Imperial pow'r
 Great Hiero wielding, with illustrious toil
 Plucks ev'ry blooming virtue's fairest flower
 His royal splendour to adorn :
 Nor doth his skilful hand refuse
 Acquaintance with the tuneful muse,
 When round the mirthful board the harp² is borne.

¹ Pisa, a town in the territory of Elia, where the Olympic games were celebrated.

² At their entertainments it was a custom among the ancients to carry a harp round the table, and present it to every guest, which if any one refused out of ignorance or want of skill, he was looked upon as illiterate, or ill-bred.

STROPHE II.

Down, then, from the glitt'ring nail
 Take, O muse, thy Dorian¹ lyre ;
 If the love of Pisa's vale
 Pleasing transports can inspire ;
 Or the rapid-footed steed
 Could with joy thy bosom move,
 When unwhipp'd, with native speed,
 O'er the dusty course he drove ;
 And where deck'd with olives flows,
 Alpheus, thy immortal flood,
 On his Lord's triumphant brows
 The Olympic wreath² bestow'd.

ANTISTROPHE II.

Hiero's royal brows, whose care
 Tends the courser's noble breed ;
 Pleas'd to nurse the pregnant mare,
 Pleas'd to train the youthful steed.
 Now on that heroic land
 His far beaming glories beat,
 Where, with all his Lydian band,
 Pelops fix'd his honour'd seat :
 Pelops, by the God belov'd,
 Whose strong arms the globe embrace ;
 When by Jove's high orders mov'd,
 Clotho bless'd the healing vase.

EPODE II.

Forth from the cauldron to new life restor'd,
 Pleas'd with the lustre of his iv'ry arm

¹ Dorian lyre signifies that this ode was adapted to that measure, the most solemn of the three kinds of Grecian music ; the other two were the Lydian and Phrygian.

² The Olympic crown was composed of olive branches, of which plant there were large groves at Olympia. The river Alpheus was there worshipped as a god.

Young Pelops rose ; so ancient tales record,
 And oft these tales unheeding mortals charm ;
 While gaudy fiction deck'd with art,
 And dress'd in ev'ry winning grace,
 To truth's unornamented face
 Preferr'd, seduces oft the human heart.

Here the poet forsakes his subject, and digresses to events in the lives of Tantalus, CEnomaus, king of Pisa, his daughter Hippodamia, her lovers, &c., till he comes to Strophe vii. when he abruptly concludes the ode as follows.

STROPHE VII.

Happy he, whose glorious brow
 Pisa's honour'd chaplets crown !
 Calm his stream of life shall flow,
 Shelter'd by his high renown.
 That alone is bliss supreme,
 Which unknowing to decay,
 Still with ever-shining beam
 Gladdens each succeeding day.
 Then for happy Hiero weave
 Garlands of Æolian strains ;
 Him these honours to receive
 The Olympic law ordains.

ANTISTROPHE VII.

Nor more worthy of her lay
 Can a muse a mortal find ;
 Greater in imperial sway,
 Richer in a virtuous mind ;
 Heav'n, O king, with tender care
 Waits thy wishes to fulfil.
 Then e'er long will I prepare,
 Plac'd on Chronium's sunny hill,
 Thee in sweeter verse to praise,
 Following thy victorious steeds ;
 If to prosper all thy ways
 Still thy guardian god proceeds.

EPODE VII.

Fate hath in various stations rank'd mankind ;
 In royal pow'r the long gradations end.
 By that horizon prudently confin'd,
 Let not thy hopes to farther views extend.
 Long may'st thou wear the regal crown,
 And may thy bard his wish receive,
 With thee, and such as thee to live,
 Around his native Greece for wisdom known.

ODE VII.

Inscribed to Diagoras, the son of Damagetus, of Rhodes, who in the seventy-ninth Olympiad obtained the victory in the exercise of the Cæstus. This ode was in great esteem among the ancients ; it is in the heroic measure.

STANZA I.

As when a father in the golden vase,
 The pride and glory of his wealthy stores,
 Bent his lov'd daughter's nuptial torch to grace,
 The vineyard's purple dew's profusely pours.

V.

Thus on the valiant, on the swift, and strong,
 Castalia's genuine nectar I bestow ;
 And pouring forth the muse-descended song,
 Bid to their praises the rich numbers flow.

XXXIX.

Here a secure retreat from all his woes
 Astydameia's hapless offspring¹ found ;
 Here, like a god in undisturb'd repose,
 And like a god with heav'nly honours crown'd.

XL.

His priests and blazing altars he surveys,
 And hecatombs that feed the od'rous flame ;
 With games, memorial of his deathless praise ;
 Where twice, Diagoras, unmatched in fame,

¹ Thepolemus, at Rhodes, the ancestor of Diagoras.

XLI.

Twice on thy head the livid poplar shone,
 Mix'd with the darksome pine, that binds the brows
 Of Isthmian victors, and the Nemean crown,
 And ev'ry palm that Attica bestows.

XLII.

Diagoras th' Arcadian vase obtain'd ;
 Argos to him adjudg'd her brazen shield ;
 His mighty hands the Theban tripod gain'd,
 And bore the prize from each Bœotian field.

XLIII.

Six times in rough Ægina he prevail'd ;
 As oft Pellene's robe of honour won ;
 And still at Megara in vain assail'd,
 He with his name hath fill'd the victor's stone.

XLIV.

O thou, who high on Atabyrius¹ thron'd,
 Seest from his summits all this happy isle,
 By thy protection by my labours crown'd ;
 Vouchsafe, Saturnius, on my verse to smile !

XLV.

And grant to him, whose virtue is my theme,
 Whose valiant heart th' Olympic wreaths proclaim,
 At home his country's favour and esteem,
 Abroad, eternal, universal fame.

XLVI.

For well to thee Diagoras is known ;
 Ne'er to injustice have his paths declin'd ;
 Nor from his sires degenerates the son ;
 Whose precepts and examples fire his mind.

¹ Atabyrius was a mountain in Rhodes, on the top of which was a temple of Jupiter.

XLVII.

Then from obscurity preserve a race,
 Who to their country joy and glory give ;
 Their country, that in them views ev'ry grace,
 Which from their great forefathers they receive.

XLVIII.

Yet as the gales of fortune various blow,
 To-day tempestuous, and to-morrow fair,
 Due bounds, ye Rhodians, let your transports know ;
 Perhaps to-morrow comes a storm of care.

ODE IX.

Inscribed to Epharmostus of Opus, on his Olympic and Pythian victories.

STROPHE I.

The lay Archilochus¹ prepared, the mead
 Of ev'ry victor on Olympia's sand,
 Might have sufficed thrice chanted ; to proceed
 Brave Epharmostus and his social band ;
 But from her bow let each Aonian maid
 The glitt'ring shafts of harmony prepare.

¹ Archilochus composed a hymn which was sung before all the Olympic victors, who had not a favourite poet of their own to celebrate their particular exploits. It was sung before them three times ; firstly, in the Stadium, when proclaimed conqueror ; secondly, in the Gymnasium ; and thirdly, in their own country, at the solemnity of the triumphal entry. Of this ode only the two first verses have come down to us, beginning

Ω Καλλωνικε, χαιρε, "O glorious victor, hail !"

When the conquerors were not rich enough to hire a band of professional singers, and there happened to be no musician present, Archilochus framed a word to imitate the sound of the harp, (*Τηνελλα*, *Tenella*) which the leader of the chorus chanted forth, and was answered by the others in the words, "O glorious victor," &c.

STROPHE IV.

Twice, Epharmostus, too,¹ thy matchless might,
 Fair Corinth saw, and twice Nemea's ground :
 Argos thy manly brows with glory dight,
 And Attica thy youthful forehead crown'd :
 What praise thou mets't in Marathon's fam'd course,
 Now, scorning with the beardless youth to run !
 Match'd with the veteran race, thy rapid force,
 Temper'd with skill, the silver goblet won ;
 Shout with exulting voice the friendly train,
 To see the loveliest youth the fairest trophies gain.

ANTISTROPHE IV.

In Lycian, Jove's high feast with wonder glow'd
 Parrhasia's sons, thy valour to behold ;
 And fair Pellana on thy worth bestow'd
 Her prize, a guard secure from winter's cold.
 Iolaus' tomb, and fair Eleusis plain,
 Wash'd by the briny wave, thy deeds attest.
 Tho' men by labour strive applause to gain,
 Yet native merit ever shines the best ;
 Nor shall the wreaths attain'd by toil and care,
 With heaven-descended might, and inborn worth compare.

EPODE IV.

Not every path extends the same,
 But various are the roads to fame ;
 With diff'rent eye the same pursuits we view,
 Nor all one wish with equal zeal pursue ;
 But his great fame shall highest soar,
 Who climbs the arduous heights of science, sacred lore.
 By which inspired, I now proclaim
 My hero's strength, his courage, and his fame ;

¹ In reference to the victories of Lampromachus, the kinsman of Epharmostus.

Who, conqueror on Oilia's plain
 Bade the bright meed of victory twine,
 Great Ajax, round thy votive fane,
 And grac'd with wreaths the hallow'd shrine.

PYTHIAN ODE.

Inscribed to Hiero of Ætna, king of Syracuse, who, in the twenty-ninth Pythiad, which answers to the seventy-eighth Olympiad, gained the victory in the chariot race.

I. DECADE I.

Hail, golden lyre ! whose heaven-invented string
 To Phœbus, and the black-hair'd nine belongs ;
 Who in sweet chorus round their tuneful king
 Mix with thy sounding chords their sacred songs.

IX.

For human virtue from the gods proceeds,
 They the wise mind bestow'd and smooth'd the tongue
 With elocution, and for mighty deeds
 The nervous arm with manly vigour strung.
 All these are Hiero's : these to rival lays
 Call forth the bard : arise then, muse, and speed
 To this contention ; strive in Hiero's praise,
 Nor fear thy efforts shall his worth exceed ;
 Within the lines of truth secure to throw,
 Thy dart shall still surpass each vain attempting foe.

XVIII.

Nor less distasteful is excessive fame
 To the sour palate of the envious mind ;
 Who hears with grief his neighbours goodly name,
 And hates the fortune that he ne'er shall find.
 Yet in thy virtue, Hiero, persevere !
 Since to be envied is a nobler fate

¹ Decade, (*δεκα*, G. *decas*, L.) a number containing ten, in reference to the lines.

Than to be pitied : let strict justice steer
 With equitable hand the helm of state,
 And arm thy tongue with truth : O king, beware
 Of ev'ry step ! a prince can never lightly err.

XX.

When in the mouldering urn the monarch lies,
 His fame in lively characters remains,
 Or grav'd in monumental histories,
 Or deck'd and painted in Aonian strains.
 Thus fresh and fragrant, and immortal blooms
 The virtue, Cræsus, of thy gentle mind.
 While fate to infamy and hatred dooms
 Sicilia's tyrant, scorn of human kind ;
 Whose ruthless bosom swell'd with cruel pride,
 When in his brazen bull, the broiling wretches died.


XXI.

Him therefore nor in sweet society
 The gen'rous youth conversing ever name ;
 Nor with harp's delightful melody
 Mingle his odious inharmonious fame.
 The first, the greatest bliss on man conferr'd
 Is, in the acts of virtue to excel ;
 The second, to obtain their high reward,
 The soul-exulting praise of doing well.
 Who both these lots attain, is bless'd indeed,
 Since fortune here below can give no richer meed.

The concluding lines of this decade show that Pindar's sentiments and morality were of the highest and purest cast.

Theocritus flourished 272 B. C.

This poet was a native of Syracuse, in the island of Sicily, and is looked up to as the father and founder of



pastoral poetry. Of all his writings we have only now extant his *Idyllia*,¹ and *Epigrams*. His poems are the result of his own observation; he described what he saw and felt. Many of his characters and scenes are the immediate transcripts of nature. He generally wrote in the modern Doric, sometimes he used the Ionic; the Doric dialect was of two sorts, the old and the new; the old sounded rough and harsh, but the new much more smooth and soft. The *Bucolics*² of Theocritus³ have been much criticised. He has been accused of disguising the characters of his shepherds and peasants, by making them speak of high and exalted subjects: the opinion expressed by Longinus appears to be most judicious, that he has shown the happiest vein for pastoral poetry, excepting where he has deviated from the country. There is no doubt that he displays simplicity, freedom, and tenderness. Virgil is the great rival of the Sicilian; he not only imitates him, but frequently translates several lines together. It is remarkable that we know scarcely anything of Theocritus, but what may be gathered from himself; it seems that dissatisfied with the cold attentions of Hiero, king of Syracuse, he left Sicily for the court of Alexandria, at that time under Ptolemy Philadelphus, the patron of the muses, and by whom he was kindly received. Theocritus is said to have been strangled by order of Hiero, for an invective against him: this appears to be incorrect; we have no proof that he returned to Syracuse; he seems to have been confounded with a rhetorician of Chios of the same name, which led to the mistake; indeed Theocritus, fearful that such an error might occur, tells us in one of his own epigrams:—

¹ Derived from *εἰδυλλον*, a small short poem.

² Derived from *βουκολικος*, pastoral.

³ It is difficult to assign a reason why Theocritus, with his rival Bucolists, Bion and Moschus, who will be mentioned hereafter, are excluded from any share in the honours of Meleager's garland.

' A Syracusian born, no right I claim
 To Chios, and Theocritus my name :
 Praxagoras' and fam'd Philina's son ;
 My laurels from unborrow'd verse are won.

IDYLLIUM I.

Thyrsis, or the Himeræan Ode.

This Idyllium contains a dialogue, between the shepherd Thyrsis and a goatherd. It is with much propriety affixed to all the other Idyllia, and may be considered as the pattern and standard of the ancient Bucolic poems.

Thyrsis.

Sweet are the whispers of yon vocal pine,
 Whose boughs, projecting o'er the springs, recline ;
 Sweet is thy warbled reed's melodious lay ;
 Thou, next to Pan, shalt bear the prize away :
 If to the god a horn'd he-goat belong,
 The gentler female shall reward thy song ;
 If he the female claim, a kid's thy share,
 And, till you milk them, kids are dainty fare.

Goatherd.

Sweeter thy song, O shepherd, than the rill
 That rolls its music down the rocky hill :
 If one white ewe content the tuneful nine,
 A stall-fed lamb, meet recompence, is thine ;
 And if the Muses claim the lamb their due,
 My gentle Thyrsis shall obtain the ewe.

Thyrsis.

Wilt thou on this declivity repose,
 Where the rough tamarisk luxuriant grows,
 And gratify the nymphs with sprightly strain ?
 I'll feed thy goats and tend the browsing train.

Goatherd.

I dare not, dare not, shepherd, grant your boon,
 Pan's rage I fear,¹ who always rests at noon,
 When tir'd with hunting, stretch'd in sleep along,
 His bitter rage will burst upon my song :
 But well you know love's pains, which Daphnis rues,
 You the great master of the rural muse ;
 Let us beneath yon shady elm retreat,
 Where nature forms a lovely pastoral seat,
 Where sculptur'd Naiads and Priapus stand,
 And groves of oak extending o'er the land ;
 There if you sing as sweetly as of yore,
 When you the prize from Lybian Chromis bore,
 This goat with twins I'll give.

Thyrsis.

Begin, ye nine, that sweetly wont to play,
 Begin, ye muses, the bucolic lay.
 ' Thyrsis my name, to Ætna I belong,
 Sicilian swain, and this is Thyrsis' song.'²
 Where were ye, nymphs, in what sequester'd grove ?
 Where were ye, nymphs, when Daphnis pin'd with love ?
 Did ye on Pindus' steepy top reside ?
 Or where through Tempe Peneus rolls his tide ?
 For where the waters of Anapus flow,
 Fam'd streams ! ye play'd not, nor on Ætna's brow ;
 Nor where chaste Acis laves Sicilian plains,
 Begin, ye nine, the sweet bucolic strain.
 First from the mountain winged Hermes came ;
 ' Ah ! whence,' he cried, ' proceeds this fatal flame ?
 What nymph, O Daphnis, steals thine heart away ?'
 Begin, ye nine, the sweet bucolic lay.

¹ Goats and their keepers were under the protection of Pan, it is with reason therefore that the goatherd is afraid of offending him.

² This custom was usual to the ancients ; thus Herodotus mentions his name, country, and writings in the same manner as Thyrsis.

Goatherds and hinds approach'd; the youth they hail'd,
 And shepherds kindly ask'd him what he ail'd.
 Priapus came, soft pity in his eye,
 ' And why this grief,' he said, ' ah! Daphnis, why?'
 Meanwhile the nymph disconsolately roves,
 With naked feet thro' fountains, woods, and groves,
 And thus of faithless Daphnis she complains,
 ' Ah youth! defective both in head and heart,
 A cowherd styl'd, a goatherd sure thou art.'

* * *

Cease, muses, cease the sweet bucolic lay;
 Let violets deck the bramble-bush and thorn,
 And fair Narcissus junipers adorn.
 Let all things nature's contradiction wear,
 And lofty pines produce the luscious pear;
 Since Daphnis dies let all things change around,
 Let timorous deer pursue the flying hound;
 Let screech-owls soft as nightingales complain,
 Cease, cease, ye nine, the sweet bucolic strain.
 He died—and Venus strove to raise his head,
 But fate had cut the last remaining thread.
 The lake he past, the 'whelming wave he prov'd,
 Friend to the muses, by the nymphs belov'd.
 Cease, sacred nine, that sweetly wont to play,
 Cease, cease, ye muses, the bucolic lay.
 Now, friend, the cup and goat¹ are fairly mine,
 Her milk's a sweet libation to the nine:
 Ye muses, hail! all praise to you belongs,
 And future days shall furnish better songs.

Goatherd.

O be thy mouth with figs Ægilian fill'd,
 And drops of honey on thy lips distill'd!
 Thine is the cup (for sweeter far thy voice
 Than when in spring the grasshoppers rejoice):

¹ A cup and goat having been promised to him.

Sweet is the smell, and scented as the bowers
 Wash'd by the fountains of the blissful hours.
 Come, Ciss ! let Thyrsis milk thee—Kids, forbear
 Your gambols, lo ! the wanton goat is near.

IDYLLIUM IX.

The herdsman Daphnis, and the shepherd Menalcas, are urged by a neighbouring shepherd to contend in singing ; the song is in alternate strains, and each receives a prize ; Daphnis a finely finished club, and Menalcas a conch. The beauty of this Idyllium consists in its correct character of peasant life, full of self-commendation, and boastful of its own fortune.

Daphnis, begin ! for merrily you play,
 Daphnis, begin the sweet bucolic lay ;
 Menalcas next shall sing.¹ * *

Daphnis.

Sweet low the herds along the pastur'd ground,
 Sweet is the vocal reed's melodious sound ;
 Sweet pipes the jocund herdsman, sweet I sing,
 And lodge securely by yon cooling spring,
 Where the soft skins of milk-white heifers, spread
 In order fair, compose my decent bed :
 Ah luckless ! browsing on the mountain's side
 The south wind dash'd them headlong, and they died.
 There I regard no more bright summer's fires
 Than youthful lovers their upbraiding sires.
 Thus Daphnis chanted his bucolic strain ;
 And thus Menalcas charm'd the shepherd-swain.

Menalcas.

Ætnas my parent ; there I love to dwell,
 Where the rock mountains form an ample cell :

¹ Spoken by the shepherd who solicits them to sing.

And there, with affluence blest, as great I live,
 As swains can wish, or golden slumbers give;
 By me large flocks of goats and sheep are fed,
 Their wool my pillow, and their skins my bed:
 In caldrons boil'd their flesh sustains me well;
 Dry beechen faggots wintry frosts expel.
 Thus I regard no more the cold severe,
 Than toothless men hard nuts when pulse is near.

Here ceas'd the youths; I prais'd their pastoral strains,
 And gave to each a present for his pains;
 A well-form'd club became young Daphnis' due,
 Which in my own paternal woodlands grew,
 So exquisitely shap'd from end to end,
 An artist might admire, but could not mend.
 A pearly conch, wreath'd beautifully round,
 Late on th' Icarian rocky beach I found,
 The shell I gave Menalcas for his share;
 Large was the conch, its flesh was rich and rare,
 (This in five equal portions I divide)
 And to five friends a plenteous meal supply'd.
 Pleas'd he receiv'd, and lik'd his present well,
 And thus he sweetly blew the shining shell:
 Hail, rural muses! teach your bard those strains
 Which once I sung, and charm'd the list'ning swains:
 Then would my tongue repeat the pleasing lore,
 And painful blisters¹ never gall it more.
 To grasshoppers the grasshoppers are friends,
 And ant on ant for mutual aid depends;
 The ravenous kite protects his brother kite;
 But me the muse and gentle song delight.
 O may my cave with frequent song be blest!
 For neither roseat spring, nor downy rest

¹ The ancients believed that a lie was always followed by some punishment, such as a blister on the tip of the tongue, a pimple on the nose, &c.

So sweet the labourer soothe ; nor to the bee
 Are flowers so grateful, as the muse to me :
 For Circe's strongest magic ne'er can harm
 Those whom the muses with soft rapture charm.

IDYLLIUM XI.

This is the last of the Idyllia that are generally allowed to be true pastorals ; it is very beautiful. The poet addressing himself to Nicias, a physician of Miletus, observes that there is no cure for love but the muses : he then gives an account of the passion of Polyphemus for Galatea, a sea-nymph, and describes him sitting upon a rock which overlooked the ocean, and soothing his feelings with the charms of poetry.

No remedy the power of love subdues ;
 No medicine, dearest Nicias, but the muse :
 This plain prescription gratifies the mind
 With sweet complacence—but how hard to find !
 This well you know, who first in physic shine,
 And are the lov'd familiar of the nine.
 Thus the fam'd Cyclops, Polypheme, when young,
 Calm'd his fond passion with the power of song.

* * *

Thus Cyclops learn'd love's torments to endure,
 And calm'd that passion which he could not cure.
 More sweetly far with song he sooth'd his heart,
 Than if his gold had brib'd the doctor's art.

IDYLLIUM XVII.

In this Idyllium Theocritus rises above the pastoral style, when he celebrates the praises of Ptolemy Philadelphus ; he extols him for his military preparations, and commends his love of peace ; above all he commemorates his royal munificence to the sons of the muses.

With Jove begin, ye nine, and end with Jove,
 Whene'er ye praise the greatest god above :

But if of noblest men the song ye cast,
 Let Ptolemy be first, and midst, and last.
 No bard at Bacchus' festival appears,
 Whose lyre has power to charm the ravish'd ears,
 But he bright honours and rewards imparts,
 Due to his merits, equal to his arts :
 And poets hence, for deathless song renown'd,
 The generous fame of Ptolemy resound.
 At what more glorious can the wealthy aim,
 Than thus to purchase fair and lasting fame ?
 Hail, noble Ptolemy ! illustrious king !
 Thee peer to mighty demigods I'll sing ;
 And future ages shall the verse approve :
 Hail ! and fair virtue only ask of Jove.¹

The Scolia of the Greek Poets.

The correct definition of the Greek Scolium appears to be a short ode, or lyric composition, to be sung or recited at banquets ; many of those which remain seem to have been struck off at the moment, in the manner of the Italian improvisatori of the present day. They are frequently irregular in metre, whence the name assigned to them, from σκολιός crooked ; in regard to their subjects, they were sometimes of a convivial character, generally however confined to some moral apophthegm, patriotic action, or in praise of some deity, or hero. Their nature will be made more evident by the following specimens,

¹ Theocritus having celebrated the great power and riches of Ptolemy, nobly concludes his poem with this fine precept, Ἀρετὰν γὰρ μὲν ἐκ Διὸς αἰτεῖν, "ask virtue of Jupiter," as if the king could not have too large a share of it. He was a sovereign of much learning, a zealous encourager of it in others, and a munificent patron to all who were eminent in any branch of literature. He was also a great collector of books : it is to him we are indebted for the Greek translation of Scripture, called the Septuagint. The fame of his generosity drew many celebrated poets to his court.

amongst which the famous song of Harmodius and Aristogeiton is one of the most prominent.

By Pittacus.

One of the seven sages, a native of Mitylene, where he attained the supreme power, and was contemporary with Sappho and Alcæus.

The wise with prudent thought provide
Against misfortune's coming tide:
The valiant, when the surge beats high,
Undaunted brave its tyranny.

By Bias.

Another of the seven sages, a native of Priene, 544 B. C.

O that we had the art to know
Each man by more than outward show;
To ope the door of every breast,
And see the soul's most secret place;
Then close it fast,—and, thus possess'd,
Cling to our friends with strict embrace!

By Callistratus, about 420 B. C.

A Hymn in praise of Harmodius and Aristogeiton.

My sword I'll hang upon the myrtle bough,
Aristogeiton and Harmodius brave!
All hail! for since the tyrant fell by you,
A man of Athens is no more a slave.

Belov'd Harmodius! but thou art not dead;
To thee those blest isles yield a happier seat,
Where the great soul of swift Achilles fled,
And brave Tydides found a last retreat.

My sword I'll hang upon the myrtle bough,
And once, once more my country's heroes hail;

Pierc'd in the public sacrifice by you,
The tyrant bled, the base Hipparchus¹ fell.

O live your fame through each revolving age!
Aristogeiton and Harmodius brave;
You sunk in death the ruthless tyrant's rage,
'Twas yours your country's suffering rights to save.

A PÆAN.

Io Pan! we sing to thee,
King of famous Arcady!
Mighty dancer! follower free
Of the nymphs, 'mid sport and glee!
Io pan! sing merrily
To our merry minstrelsy!
We have gain'd the victory,
We are all we wish'd to be,
And keep with pomp and pageantry
Pandroso's great mystery.

ANOTHER.

Pallas Tritonia! sov'reign power!
Defend thy lov'd Athenian tower!
Raise and protect thy cherish'd state
From civil war and stern debate!
Thou, and thy sire, her children save
From doom of an untimely grave!

PROVERBIAL.

Beneath each stone a scorpion lies:
Comrade, hold, if thou be wise;
And, lest it seize thee, have a care!
Ever in the dark suspect a snare.

¹ The seduction of a sister of Harmodius, and other tyrannical acts, raised him many enemies; he was at length killed by a band of conspirators, with Harmodius and Aristogeiton at their head, 512 B. C. The Athenians to reward these two illustrious citizens, passed a law that no one should afterwards have the honour of bearing the same name.

ANOTHER.

Whoso, in this our evil day,
Will not his dearest friend betray,
Right worthy is, in my esteem,
That gods and men should honour'd deem.

By Hybrias of Crete (date uncertain).

A SOLDIER'S RICHES.

My riches are the arms I wield,
The spear, the sword, the shaggy shield,
My bulwark in the battle-field :
With this I plough the furrow'd soil,
With this I share the reaper's toil,
With this I press the generous juice
That rich and sunny vines produce ;
With these, of rule and high command
I bear the mandate in my hand ;
For while the slave and coward fear
To wield the buckler, sword, and spear,
They bend the supplicating knee,
And own my just supremacy.

A PÆAN.

By Ariphron of Sicyon, (date uncertain).

ON HEALTH.

Health, brightest visitant from Heav'n,
Grant me with thee to rest !
For the short term by nature giv'n,
Be thou my constant guest !
For all the pride that wealth bestows,
The pleasure that from children flows,
Whate'er we court in regal state,
That makes men covet to be great :

Whatever sweet we hope to find
In love's delightful snares,

Whatever good by heav'n assign'd,
 Whatever pause from cares,—
 All flourish at thy smile divine ;
 The spring of loveliness is thine,
 And every joy that warms our hearts
 With thee approaches and departs.

No one can read this elegant production without being deeply impressed with its exquisite beauty.

A HYMN TO VIRTUE.

By Aristotle, about 352 B. C.

O sought with toil and mortal strife
 By those of human birth,
 Virtue, thou noblest end of life,
 Thou goodliest gain on earth !
 Thee, maid, to win, our youth would bear,
 Unwearied, fiery pains ; and dare
 Death for thy beauty's worth :
 So bright thy proffer'd honours shine,
 Like clusters of a fruit divine.

Sweeter than slumber's boasted joys,
 And more desir'd than gold,
 Dearer than nature's dearest ties :—
 For thee those heroes old,
 Herculcan son of highest Jove,
 And the twin-birth of Leda, strove
 By perils manifold :
 Pelides' son with like desire
 And Ajax, sought the Stygian fire.

The bard shall crown with lasting bay,
 And age immortal make
 Atarna's sov'reign, reft of day,
 For thy dear beauty's sake :

Him therefore the recording mine
 In songs extol to heights divine,
 And every chord awake ;
 Promoting still, with reverence due,
 The meed of friendship, tried and true.

CHAPTER VII.

ORIGIN OF THE GREEK DRAMA.

THESPIAS—VIEW OF THE GREEK STAGE—ITS VARIOUS PARTS
 —GREAT TRAGIC POETS—ÆSCHYLUS — SOPHOCLES—AND
 EURIPIDES—ILLUSTRATIONS.

The age of Lyric poetry was succeeded by that of the drama, but philosophy had made considerable progress in the interval, and the seven sages had preceded the three great tragic poets. Between the times of Homer and Æschylus, the moral state of Greece had been changed, and her social condition enlarged. Lycurgus had given laws to Sparta, Solon to Athens; schools and sects of philosophy had been founded, and the material world began to be understood.

Grecian tragedy forms one of the most delightful walks in the garden of classical literature; and while it presents models of genuine pathos and beautiful writing, it throws important light on the superstitions, prejudices, and moral feelings of that highly intellectual people, the Greeks. At its first and original outset, tragedy did not in any degree correspond with the idea which the word suggests to a modern ear, for it included nothing actually dramatic; its earliest form of celebration was confined to the simple object of singing choral odes, accompanied with music and dancing at festivals in honour of Bacchus at the conclusion of the vintage. At these festivals recitations took place very opposite in their character; the one, grave and lofty; the

other, of a sensual and buffo description, which latter formed the germ of comedy. The sacrifice of a goat to Bacchus, which formed a part of the ceremonial, is believed to have given birth to the term 'tragedy,' τραγωδία, signifying the goat-song.¹

Thespis, of whom we know little more than the name, was contemporary with Solon, about 570 B. C. He added to the interest created by the choral songs in introducing an actor, whose office it was to recite, during the pauses of the singing, verses in honour of Hercules, Theseus, or some other hero of antiquity. The face of the actor was bedaubed with wine-lees, and the simple paraphernalia necessary to the exhibition were conveyed in a waggon, somewhat after the fashion of our travelling showmen, who frequent the public fairs. According to Bentley, one of the most learned and acute of modern critics, no written drama of Thespis ever existed; his era is fixed by the Parian chronicle as follows: "since Thespis the poet flourished, the first who taught (or exhibited) tragedy, for which a goat was appointed as the prize CCLXXIII years," or 537 B. C.: from this date there could only have been about two generations between him, and the battle of Marathon. Phrynichus is mentioned as a scholar and the successor of Thespis, and from the effects ascribed by Herodotus to one of his tragedies, the subject of which was on the capture of Miletus by the Persians, it would appear that he was a poet of no ordinary powers. So deeply affected, says the historian, were the auditory by the representation, that they burst into tears; but he adds, the poet was fined a thousand drachmæ for thus vividly reminding them of a domestic calamity, and the repetition of the piece was forbidden. There is no reason to suppose that Phrynichus materially advanced the art, or structure of tragedy, be-

¹ The goat was sacrificed as an animal hateful to Bacchus, because its bite is particularly hurtful to the vine.

yond the point at which it was left by Thespis. On this simple basis, and with these imperfect materials, Æschylus conceived and formed the regular drama; he has therefore been justly hailed by succeeding ages as the father of tragic, as Homer is of epic poetry.

The term, theatre, suggests to a modern ear the idea of a building devoted to nocturnal amusement, blazing with splendid lights, and replete with objects of excitement. These ideas must be greatly modified in order to form a just notion of the theatres of the Greeks; they were open to the skies; the representations took place in the day time, and from considerations of propriety no female actors were allowed. Occasional annoyance was doubtless experienced by sudden changes in the weather, or from radiant sunshine, but these were guarded against by awnings of canvas, &c.; an occasional interruption was deemed by the spectators of little moment, in comparison with the delight of inhaling the pure air, and being fanned by the soft breezes of their delicious climate. The modern theatre is considered a scene devoted to pleasure, few individuals go there with the idea of receiving positive instruction; but tragic representation among the Greeks, was allied to religious ceremonial, and might be termed a school of philosophy; the aim was noble, however imperfect the execution. It has already been mentioned, that tragedy under Thespis was nothing more than the recitation by a single actor of the exploits, or adventures of real or fabulous heroes, which relieved at intervals the monotony of the chorus. By the introduction of two, and occasionally of more persons,¹ and by assigning to each a distinct part, Æschylus gave the representation of a varied and continuous action, accompanied by all the animation of dialogue, and excitive of those emotions which

¹ It has been asserted by some writers on the ancient drama, that Sophocles was the first who introduced a third actor; this is a mistake, Æschylus frequently introduced three or more.

the semblance of reality produces on the imagination. The illusion of appropriate, though not moveable scenery was added; in giving effect to which the poet availed himself of the assistance of distinguished artists. In this particular, according to Aristotle, Sophocles greatly improved on the inventions of his predecessor; yet it is obvious that the machinery necessary to give effect to some of the scenes in the existing dramas of Æschylus required no ordinary degree of ingenuity and invention. The requisite scenery of the ancient drama, however, was generally simple; the outside of a temple, a palace, or the interior court of either, sufficed for the greater part of the incidents introduced into these compositions. The privacy in which the Greek women lived forbade the representation of the interior apartments of the houses, and thus excluded from the ancient drama those scenes of amatory intrigue so frequent on the modern stage. Much taste was displayed by Æschylus in the drapery of his performers, which according to Athenæus was arranged with such elegance and attention to propriety, as to have furnished models for improving the habits of the ministers of religion; the costume of the deities was borrowed from that of the most decorous and appropriate of their respective statues. His actors were elevated much above the natural stature by lofty buskins,¹ and they wore sculptured or painted masks, adapted to the characters which they represented. These were rude in the first instance, and made of the bark of trees, but as the fine arts advanced towards perfection they acquired a high degree of finish and expression; they were shifted as the progress of the action required a change of expression, and so constructed as to aid the powers of the voice. Many imitations of these masks exist in collections of ancient sculpture and painting, and confirm the opinion that the first artists of Athens were employed to give to the originals the most exquisite traits of feature and character. The use of such an expedient arose from

¹ A kind of high shoe.

the magnitude of the Greek theatres; and no female performers being allowed on the stage, feminine grace, beauty, and dignity, could only be imitated by the use of the mask.

The first theatre of Athens was a rude fabric of wood, and was burnt down in the time of Pratinas.¹ The succeeding building was probably erected under the auspices of Æschylus, and adapted to his inventions and improvements; but was either totally rebuilt, or greatly enlarged by Pericles; when it assumed a magnificence consistent with that age of luxury and embellishment. The general form and some portions of the masonry of this fabric are still discoverable at Athens, and bear the appellation of the theatre of Bacchus. In it the chef-d'œuvres of Sophocles and Euripides were represented. From the result of scientific modern admeasurements of the remains of the most capacious of the Greek theatres, it does not appear that they were capable of holding, even when crowded, more than twenty thousand spectators. The beautiful situation occupied by the remains of many of these buildings, justifies the supposition, that they were studiously placed so as to command the finest objects of the adjacent country. The majestic mountains, and luxuriant plains, the groves, the gardens, the land—locked and open sea, in the neighbourhood of many of the cities of Greece, presented the best materials which taste could desire for such elegant combinations. The charm of southern landscape, however, depends not solely on the romantic features which enter into its composition; the purity of the atmosphere, the rich and magical hues of colour, the soft loveliness of the aerial perspective, the powerful relief of light and shadow, produce on the senses whilst contemplating the charms of nature, impres-

¹ He lived in the time of Æschylus, but was considerably older; he was the inventor of the satiric drama, a species of the burlesque, to which the Athenians were partial, and of which a specimen is preserved in the Cyclops of Euripides.

sions of pleasure, seldom equalled even on our finest days in these northern regions. The theatre of Athens in point of situation was considered perfect, and is believed from the magnificence, beauty, and variety of its view, to have transcended all similar structures. In shape the ancient theatres were not unlike a horse-shoe; the seats of the audience consisted of steps, ranging one above another, round the segment of nearly three-fourths of a circle. The lower seats belonged to persons of quality, and to magistrates; the middle to the commonalty, and the upper were appropriated to females¹—*Scalae*, or flights of steps, diverging in equi-distant radii from the bottom to the top, formed the communication with the seats; what is termed in modern theatres the pit, was called the *orchestra*, though relatively much contracted, and was occupied by the chorus, a band of performers, who recited or sung the lyrical compositions or odes which occurred between the different acts of the piece. In the centre of the *orchestra*, on a level with the stage, was an altar, called *Thymele*, on which a sacrifice was offered before the tragic contests commenced; there were steps round it, on which the chorus stood when they joined in the dialogue of the actors.

The scene, *Σκηνή*, was a solid architectural building of considerable elevation, presenting a highly ornamental façade, with three large and two smaller gateways. It was often decorated with columns and statues; and to it were suspended such painted and moveable scenes as the piece to be represented might require. In front was a permanent stage, a portion of which was covered by a temporary roof or awning, serving to conceal the mechanism of the scenery, and to suspend the *αυλαία* or curtain; this was termed

¹ It has been questioned whether females frequented the theatre; that they did not attend comic spectacles in the time of Aristophanes, Schlegel has gone some way to prove, but that they were present at tragedies is now generally admitted.

the proscenium. The stage on which the actors stood, called *λογειον*, and in Latin *pulpitum*, occupied the width of the orchestra, and was placed in front of the permanent stage; its shape varied according to the purposes of the representation, and it was moveable.


The ancient theatres were not only used for scenical representations, but also for contests in music, and in other departments of genius and skill. Various festivals, and not unfrequently political meetings, were likewise held in them. At Athens the assemblies of the people were originally held in the Pnyx, a place of concourse, venerable for its antiquity, and interesting from its associations with the noblest recollections of her history: towards the close of the Peloponnesian war, however, they more frequently took place in the theatre of Bacchus. In the age of Philip and Alexander, the custom had become frequent of honouring with a crown of gold any citizens who had rendered signal services to their country; and on these occasions proclamation was made in the theatre of the name and merits of the individual thus highly honoured,¹ during the grand festival of Bacchus, when the new tragedies were exhibited, and the throng of strangers was great.

Æschylus frequently acted a part in his own dramas, and animated the performers by his example and instructions; he skilfully adapted the embellishments of the chorus to the incidents of the piece, although he was in the habit of making too great a use of physical means, by which he overstepped the bounds of propriety. An example of this description occurred at the representation of the Eumenides, or Furies, a drama still extant, in which Orestes, after taking vengeance on his mother for the murder of his father, is represented as haunted and pursued by such imaginary phantoms. These infernal deities were introduced on the stage, their hair braided

¹ The rival orations of Demosthenes and Æschines de Corona, are fraught with allusions to the custom.

with serpents, torches, and other emblems of terror in their hands, accompanied with a numerous train of kindred attendants; when the effects produced by fear, on some of the females and children of the auditory, were so great, that the magistrates interfered, and restricted by a legislative enactment the number of the chorus to thirty; it was afterwards reduced to fifteen. Whether the dialogue of tragedy were delivered in a tone of appropriate declamation, or in a style of impressive recitative, regulated by a musical accompaniment, has been the subject of much learned discussion. The colloquial, though dignified style of the Grecian drama, its fidelity to nature, simplicity and pathos, appear entirely opposed to a highly artificial mode of delivery; yet a measured and impressive recitation, and an elevated tone of voice, must have been essential to the due transmission of sound over a vast area; and some slight musical accompaniment to regulate the pitch of the voice, would not be at variance with an easy, though lofty style of declamation, which the Greek drama undoubtedly was.

Under Thespis and his immediate successor, little or no relation appears to have existed between the subjects of the chorus, and that of the accompanying monologues; the latter were merely introduced as interludes between the pauses of the chorus; the case was under Æschylus exactly reversed, the dialogue formed the main body of the piece, and the chorus became no more than an episode. The choral songs furnished an impressive comment on the incidents of the drama; giving utterance in sage and solemn strains, to the moral or religious sentiments, or to the patriotic emotions, which it was supposed the passing scene ought to excite in the spectators. It has been said, in regard to the lofty style, and the lyrical inspiration of those compositions, that if in ancient tragedy the performers uttered the language of heroes and kings, they spoke in the choruses the language of the gods. The individuals composing the chorus



represented any character that best suited the purpose of the drama; whether it required that they should personate a band of aged men, or of sage matrons, priests, virgins, attendants on festal mirth, or funeral solemnity. While singing, or reciting the part assigned to them, they danced in time to the measure and cadence of the music, in bands of equal number; moving from right to left as they repeated the choral strophe, then back from left to right during the antistrophe, and facing the audience as they recited the epode. The style of the dances was grave or lively, according to the nature of the poetry which they accompanied: an idea may be formed of the skill with which the dancing was accommodated to the subject, from the testimony of Aristotle, quoted by Athenæus, who states that Telestes, a performer in the "Seven Chiefs against Thebes," was so accomplished in this particular, that the course of the action was perfectly expressed by his movements.

The musical instruments which served as an accompaniment to the voices of the chorus were few and simple; the flute, the pipe, and the lyre. As the odes directly related to the incidents of the piece, the music was not to overwhelm the voices of the singers. In martial dramas, like those of the 'Seven Chiefs,' the introduction of the trumpet was permitted. Of the extraordinary effects produced by modern orchestras, in giving to the compositions of the poet the united aid of exquisite singing and music in the most complex, yet harmonious combination, and with a power that astonishes even unscientific ears, the Greeks appear to have known nothing. It is doubtful, however, whether such combinations can touch the feelings like the tones of the human voice, if they be of a very fine quality, and aided with a simple accompaniment. Here appears to have been the true source of the wonderful power ascribed to Grecian music in melting, or exciting the passions. The early attention which the Greeks paid to vocal, no less than

to musical science, their high degree of natural taste, and the favourable influence of their delightful climate, joined in giving to the human voice among them a compass, sweetness, and flexibility, unknown in countries less polished. The expense of getting up the chorus was considerable; it was defrayed by the government for every poet whose piece, after undergoing the scrutiny of appointed judges, was deemed worthy of being admitted to the tragic contest, and great pains were taken by diligent rehearsals, to prepare the performers for an able discharge of their allotted functions. Athenæus records an instance in which Sophocles sung to the music of his lyre in the chorus of one of his own tragedies.

Occasionally, the persons composing the choral band took part in the dialogue itself, by means of their κορυφαῖος (coryphæus) or leader; he spoke according to circumstances, either as a single person, or for the whole band; or aided the progress of the action by brief explanations, or expressions of pity for suffering virtue, or in condemnation of crime or impiety. At such times the chorus advanced to the front of the orchestra, so as to be brought within the sphere of action; it was only resorted to however, when circumstances called for explanations, which could not properly proceed from the actors in the drama. When the incidents that elicited remarks were of a nature to excite strong emotions of terror, pity, surprise, or admiration, there must have been something ludicrous in the contrast between the feelings of the spectators, and the cold truisms uttered by the chorus. This absurdity was a necessary consequence of that law of the Grecian tragedy, which did not permit the chorus to quit the theatre during the progress of the drama, and yet never allowed of their active intervention. They were consequently auditors of all supposed soliloquies, privy to all plots, spectators of all impending dangers, and at the same time generally condemned to passive quiescence.

Sir Walter Scott in his *Essay on the Drama* has placed this matter in a very humorous light ; he says, "when a deed of violence was to be acted, the helpless chorus, instead of interfering to prevent the atrocity to which the perpetrator had made them privy, could only by the rules of the theatre exhaust their sorrow and surprise in dithyrambics." This was also ridiculed by Bentley in his farce called the "*Wishes*," in one part of which curious performance, he introduced a chorus after the manner of the Greeks, who are informed by one of the *dramatis personæ*, that a madman with a fire-brand has just entered the vaults beneath the place which they occupy. The chorus instead of moving from the dangerous vicinity, commence a long complaint of the hardship of their fate, exclaiming pathetically, 'Oh ! unhappy madman ; or rather, unhappy we the victims of this madman's fury ; or thrice, thrice unhappy the friends of the madman, who did not secure him and restrain him from the perpetration of such deeds of frenzy ; or three and four times hapless the keeper of the magazine, who forgot the keys in the door !' This is certainly a humorous and severe caricature on the extra-official functions of the chorus ; it was a sad mistake of the ancient drama to place them in a situation to survey scenes of crime, danger, and terror, often with complete apathy.

Before dismissing the subject of the chorus, the light which it throws on the moral opinions of the Greeks is deserving of attention. The mystic lore of Pythagoras, the lofty speculations of Plato, the logical subtleties of the schools, were for the philosophical few. The tragic poet had to arouse or touch the feelings of the multitude ; he consequently selected those topics to which the hearts of his auditors were most likely to respond. A tone of ideal grandeur was diffused over his characters and pervades his sentiments, yet not in such a degree as wholly to lift them out of the sphere of humanity ; making therefore due allow-

ance for the exaggeration of poetry, we derive from the dramatic writers a tolerably correct idea, of the moral resources of their countrymen, under the pressure of the sorrows and trials incidental to human life. It is impossible to peruse the choruses of Æschylus without acknowledging that his moral aim was lofty, and his piety sincere. Reverence for the gods, respect for the conjugal tie, inflexible justice, moderation in prosperity, patience under sufferings, devoted love of country, generous hospitality; these are the moral principles which he inculcates, and to which his countrymen, however defective their practice, listened with applause.

The principal celebration of the tragic contests took place at the great festival of Bacchus, in part of March and April. Athens was then crowded with strangers, and with the deputies from her dependencies, who came to pay into her treasury their annual tribute, all anxious to view these 'dramatic olympia.' When trilogies were acted, the contest must have continued through successive days: a trilogy consisted of three tragedies, the subjects of which were not necessarily allied and continuous, although they often were so. Occasionally a tetrology was produced, by adding to the three tragedies a fourth piece, which was usually a satiric drama. The prize was not awarded to the victor by the suffrages of the assembled multitude, at the same time their impressions naturally influenced the decision; it was committed by the presiding Archon¹ to the award of a select number of judges, who were bound by a solemn oath to observe the most rigid impartiality. The victor was crowned in public, and hailed with enthusiastic plaudits. Glory was the ostensible and immediate prize, for a wreath of ivy was the only visible fruit of the triumph. Besides the name of the victor, one or two of those who approached nearest to him in merit were also proclaimed, and it was

¹ The chief magistrate of Athens.

usual for the former to offer sacrifice for his success, in the presence of his friends and his choral performers, at the earliest opportunity after the contest.

The prize of the victorious chorus was a tripod, which was usually dedicated by the choregus, or chorus-master, in a particular street or quarter, adjoining the theatre, and thence denominated 'tripodes.' To these tripods were attached the names of the presiding archon, of the poet who composed the piece, and of the choregus; most of the choragic inscriptions at Athens are of the latter part of the fourth century. The number of festivals and processions was such as to oblige each tribe to supply a choregus, who was maintained, if the tribe were poor, at the expense of the state. His first duty after providing a set of singers and musicians, selected in general from his own tribe, was to appoint a teacher to instruct them in their parts; their diet was regulated with a view to strengthen the voice; he had also to furnish the sacred clothes adorned with gold, and all the other ornamental appendages of the performers. At festivals and pompous processions he walked at their head, wearing a gilt crown, and a splendid robe. In subsequent periods when tragedy was carried from Athens into the courts of princes, the splendour of the tragic chorus was exceedingly magnificent, particularly at Alexandria and Rome. In earlier times, however, when a goat was the prize of tragedy, the Cyclian choruses contended for a bull, and the harpers for a calf. Contests between rival choruses were not confined to tragic representation, but occurred at various public festivals. The famous Simonides won fifty-six of these victories, as appears from an epitaph on his tomb recorded by Tzetzes.

Εξ ἐπὶ πεντήκοντα, Σίμωνιδῆ, ἦραο νίκας,
Καὶ τρίποδας.

" Fifty-six victories and as many tripods,
O Simonides, thou didst obtain !"

His great contemporaries, Themistocles and Aristides, also held the office of choregus.

The common people of Athens were admitted to the theatre at two oboli¹ a head, by a decree passed through the influence of Pericles, which sum the magistrates were directed to pay for every applicant unable to do so for himself. The public treasury of Athens, supplied in a great measure by the contributions levied on her allies, was prodigally drawn on for this purpose. Severe censures were occasionally thrown out against the impropriety of the practice by public orators, but the people were so tenacious of their privilege, that even the eloquence of Demosthenes when directed against it proved unavailing. Of the degree in which their imaginations were absorbed by the fictitious events of the drama, the following remarkable instance is recorded. The dreadful intelligence of the complete destruction of the Athenian fleet and army under Nicias in Sicily, towards the close of the Peloponnesian war, reached the city, when its population was assembled in the theatre, completely engrossed by the representation of a drama, half tragic, half comic, by Hegemon. The messenger announced the fatal news; scarcely a person there but had lost a son, or husband, a brother, or a friend. A moment's pause gave expression to the thrilling sensation of general grief, the next, a signal was given to go on with the piece; whilst the audience, wrapping their heads in their mantles, in order to conceal their emotions of grief from the foreigners who were present, continued to listen to it to the end.

Æschylus flourished 500 B.C.


This great poet, "the father of tragedy," was born at Eleusis in Attica, in the sixty-third Olympiad, or about

¹ About 1d or 1½d.

525 B. C. His family was noble and distinguished in many of its branches by superior talents, and eminent services rendered to their country. According to Suidas, Æschylus contended for and won the tragic prize in his twenty-fifth year, in competition with Pratinas and Chærilus; it is doubtful whether at this early period he had shaken off the trammels of the Thespian school. The next mention of him is in the career of arms: he fought at Marathon under Miltiades in his thirty-fifth year, and so highly distinguished himself, as to be of those to whom the prize of peculiar valour was assigned, after the termination of that conflict so glorious to liberty and to Greece. The era which followed the defeat of Xerxes has been designated as the brightest in the annals of Athens; placed at the head of the Grecian confederacy by her bravery, and her policy, the neighbouring maritime states became in general either her tributaries or dependents; wealth and leisure followed, not only the useful and elegant arts, but the severer sciences were assiduously cultivated, and Athens rose again from the Persian ashes, at once the eye and ornament of Greece. It was at this period that Æschylus attained the summit of poetical reputation; and the tragic contest guided by his talent, became the favourite popular amusement of the Athenians.¹ That which he achieved has deservedly enrolled his name among the illustrious few, to whom the highest honours of genius are accorded. He invented all those prominent attributes in the structure, the spirit, and the accompaniments of tragedy, which have raised it by the suffrages of the greatest critics, to a rank among the various productions of poetry, second only in dignity to the *Epopeæ*. He not only succeeded in acting on the feelings, and touching the passions of his auditory, by means and for ends consistent with virtue and propriety,

¹ The Lacedæmonians had no tragedies, nor indeed any expression of the passions.

he also represented the objects he described, invested them with suitable forms, and placed them in such a manner before the spectators, as should realize to their imaginations the images which tradition suggested of the heroes, the sages, and mythology of the deities of his country. The strength and energy of fancy with which he conceived his subjects are obvious throughout his dramas, his genius is sublime, and his imagination unbounded. Homer himself has not more strongly individualized his Hector, his Ajax, his Achilles, than Æschylus has his Agamemnon, his Clytemnestra, his Prometheus; it is certain that he had deeply studied Homer, and regarded him as his model, for he used to say with much modesty in reference to his own productions, "that his pieces were but scraps from the magnificent banquet of Homer." The lyrical inspiration of his choruses, often approaches the sublimity of Pindar; and the Greek language, nervous and comprehensive as it is, can hardly give full expression to the compass and depth of his thoughts. Longinus praises in strong terms the magnificence of his imagery, and Dionysius of Halicarnasus, says he peculiarly excelled in loftiness of idea, and in a just conception of what constitutes dignity in the delineation of the passions. A charge is brought against Æschylus that terror appears to have been the chief object of his pieces, and that he called in too much the aid of physical means, to make a strong impression on the senses. Great indulgence however is due to original genius, which quitting the beaten track that has already been travelled, makes daring incursions into the unexplored regions of invention, and boldly strikes into the pathless sublime; if perfect and faultless composition is ever to be expected from human faculties, it must be at some happy period, when a noble and graceful simplicity, the result of well-regulated and sober magnanimity, reigns over the general manners.



The latter days of Æschylus did not correspond in pros-

perity to those of his youth and manhood. It is certain that he exiled himself from Athens, and went to the court of Hiero I., king of Syracuse, a prince of literary taste and great magnificence, whose name has been immortalized by Pindar, and who received him with kindness and hospitality. The exact cause of quitting his country is involved in obscurity. It is certain he had much to encounter from the Athenian mob, whose caprice was proverbial, and who, although not naturally cruel, committed dreadful crimes against their most excellent and talented citizens, when their fury was excited either through their superstition, or envious petulance: on one occasion popular indignation was raised against him on a charge of having violated in a tragedy the sanctity of the Eleusinian mysteries. Clemens Alexandrinus says that he escaped by proving to his judges, that he was not initiated, and that his fault was unintentional; but Ælian asserts in the fifth book of his history, that he would have been capitally condemned, had not his brother Ameinias averted the rage of the judges and of the people, by stepping forward and appealing to their feelings in favour of Æschylus, by displaying the stump of the arm which he had himself lost in the battle of Salamis. His retirement has also been ascribed to resentment at the preference bestowed on a tragedy of his rival Sophocles, in a contest instituted on the occasion of the remains of Theseus, having been transferred from the Isle of Scyros to Attica, by command of an oracle. In celebration of this popular act, public games were instituted, and the tragic poets were invited to a contest; when it took place, the prize was awarded in a more solemn manner than usual, and after much deliberation it was assigned to Sophocles, then a young man twenty-nine years of age. How long Æschylus survived his self-banishment is uncertain; it is believed that he wrote his drama, called 'The Persians,' to gratify Hiero, whose court was at the time a resort for men of genius from various parts of

Greece. Out of sixty-six tragedies which he wrote, and the titles of which have been collected by Fabricius, he gained the first prize of dramatic poetry for thirteen at the Olympic games;¹ of the whole number only seven are now extant. The cause to which his death is ascribed, though mentioned by various authors, is fabulous; it is asserted that an eagle as it hovered over a rocky spot where he was seated wrapt in meditation, let fall from its talons a tortoise, mistaking the bald head of the poet for a stone, and intending to break the shell, fractured his skull. His death is placed at the eighty-first Olympiad, in the sixty-ninth year of his age. His remains were honoured by Hiero² with a splendid funeral, which was signalized by tragic contests. Great as was the poetic fame of Æschylus, he valued himself still more on the glory he had acquired at Marathon, and therefore directed that the following epitaph should be inscribed on his tomb.

Æσχυλου Ευφοριωνος Ἀθηναίου τοδε κευθει
 Μνημα καταφθιμενου πυροφοροιο Γελας.
 Ἀλκην δ'ευδοκιμον Μαραθωνιον αλσος αν ειποι,
 Και βαθυχαιτης Μηδος επισταμενος.

“This tomb covers the remains of Æschylus the Athenian, the son of Euphorion, who died at Gelas, fertile in corn. The glades of Marathon would attest his distinguished valour, and the long-haired Mede who proved it.”

Prometheus Chained.

Æschylus wrote three tragedies on the story of Prometheus; the first represented him as carrying the sacred gift of fire to men; the second as chained to mount Cau-

¹ The Olympic games were not confined to gymnastic or athletic exercises, they also encouraged competition in genius and learning, and were the resort of poets, historians, and philosophers.

² Not the Hiero who treated Theocritus with coldness and neglect.

casus ; the third as delivered from his chains ; of these only the second remains to us. There is in this extant drama, a sublimity of conception, a strength, fire, and savage dignity peculiar to this bold writer. The plot is simple, although it is throughout a splendid poem ; the interest depends on the original and expressive delineation of the individual character of Prometheus, a giant of the Titanic race, who forms a prominent figure in the earlier traditions of Greek mythology. Prometheus is chained to the crags of Caucasus by order of Jupiter, for having imparted the sacred gift of fire to men. The scenery is of the grandest description ; the wild and desolate rock frowning over the sea, the stern and imperious sons of Pallas and Styx holding up Prometheus to its rifted side, whilst Vulcan fixes his chains ; the whirlwind tearing up the sands, swelling the stormy ocean, and dashing up its waves, the thunder and lightning of vengeance roaring and flashing around him, with the figure of Prometheus unappalled in the midst, and bidding defiance to the power of Jupiter. The sombre character of this picture is relieved, and tempered with much tenderness. The reluctance of Vulcan to execute the severe commands of Jupiter, is finely contrasted to the eager unfeeling insolence of Strength and Force ; the entry of a chorus of sea nymphs, and of old Oceanus, who condole with the sufferer, and recommend submission ; the episode of Io is mournfully gentle, although an indefensible violation of the unity of action in this tragedy ; while that of Prometheus is sustained to the last, with undiminished force of colouring, discovering under its untameable sternness a benevolence that interests us in his sufferings.

STRENGTH, FORCE, VULCAN, PROMETHEUS.

Strength.

At length then to the wide earth's extreme bounds,
To Scythia are we come, those pathless wilds
Where human footstep never mark'd the ground.

Now, Vulcan, to thy task ; at Jove's command
 Fix to these high-projecting rocks this vain
 Artificer of man ; each massy link
 Draw close, and bind his adamantine chains.
 Thy radiant pride, the fiery flame, that lends
 Its aid to ev'ry art, he stole, and bore
 The gift to mortals ; for which bold offence
 The gods assign him this just punishment :
 That he may learn to reverence the pow'r
 Of Jove, and moderate his love to man.

Vulcan.

Stern pow'rs your harsh commands have here an end,
 Nor find resistance : my less hardy mind,
 Averse to violence, shrinks back, and dreads
 To bind a kindred god to this wild cliff,
 Expos'd to ev'ry storm : but strong constraint
 Compels me ; I must steel my soul and dare ;
 Jove's high commands require a prompt observance.
 High-thoughted son of truth-directing Themis,¹
 Thee with indissoluble chains, perforce,
 Must I now rivet to this savage rock.

* *

Strength.

No more : why these delays, this foolish pity ?
 Dost thou not hate a god by gods abhorr'd,
 That prostitutes thy radiant boast to man ?

Vulcan.

Strong are the ties of kindred and long converse.

Strength.

Well : but to disobey thy sire's commands
 Darest thou do that ? Is not that fear more strong ?

¹ Themis was the daughter of heaven and earth, and honoured as the goddess of truth and justice.

Vulcan.

Soft pity never touch'd thy ruthless mind.

Strength.

Will thy vain pity bring relief? forbear,
Nor waste thyself in what avails not him.

Vulcan.

Abhorr'd be all the fine skill of my hands.

Strength.

And why abhorr'd? For of these present toils
Thy art, in very truth, is not the cause.

Vulcan.

Yet wish I it had been some other's lot.

Strength.

All have their lot appointed, save to reign
In heav'n, for liberty is Jove's alone.

Chorus of Sea Nymphs in Condolence with Prometheus.

Is there a god, whose sullen soul
Feels a stern joy in thy despair?
Owns he not pity's soft control,
And drops in sympathy the tear?
All, all, save Jove; with fury driv'n
Severe he tames the sons of heav'n;
And he will tame them, till some pow'r arise
To wrest from his strong hand the sceptre of the skies.

Prometheus.

Yet he, even he,
That o'er the gods holds his despotic reign,
And fixes this disgraceful chain,
Shall need my aid, the counsels to disclose
Destructive to his honour and his throne.
But not the honied blandishment, that flows
From his alluring lips, shall ought avail;
His rigid menaces shall fail;

Nor will I make the fatal secret known,
Till his proud hands this galling chain unbind,
And his remorse soothes my indignant mind.

Chorus.

Bold and intrepid is thy soul,
Fir'd with resentment's warmest glow ;
And thy free voice disdains control,
Disdains the tort'ring curb of woe.
My softer bosom, thrill'd with fear,
Lest heavier ills await thee here,
By milder counsels wishes thee repose ;
For Jove's relentless rage no tender pity knows.

* * *

Dost thou not fear vaunting this bold discourse ?

Prometheus.

What should I fear, by fate exempt from death ?

Chorus.

But he may add fresh tortures to thy pain.

Prometheus.

Let him then add them, I await them all.

Chorus.

Wise they, who reverence the stern pow'r of vengeance.

Prometheus.

Go then, with prompt servility fall down
Before your Lord, fawn, cringe, and sue for grace.
For me, I value him at less than nothing.
But see, his messenger hastes on amain,
Th' obsequious lacquey of this new-made monarch :¹
He comes, I ween, the bearer of fresh tidings.

HERE MERCURY, THE MESSENGER OF JUPITER ENTERS.

Mercury.

To thee grown old in craft, deep drench'd in gall,
Disgustful to the gods, too prodigal

¹ Ouranus dethroned by his son Saturn, and Saturn by his son Jupiter.

Of interdicted gifts to mortal man,
 Thief of the fire of heav'n, to thee my message.
 My father bids thee say what nuptials these
 Thy tongue thus vaunts as threat'ning his high pow'r;
 And clearly say, couch'd in no riddling phrase,
 Each several circumstance; propound not to me
 Ambiguous terms, Prometheus; for thou seest
 Jove brooks not such, unfit to win his favour.

Prometheus answers with contempt and defiance; Mercury threatens further punishment, an eagle to feast upon his liver, and leaves him; the storm increases, and Prometheus concludes thus—

He fables not; I feel in very deed
 The firm earth rock; the thunder's deep'ning roar
 Rolls with redoubled rage; the bick'ring flames
 Flash thick; the eddyng sands are whirl'd on high;
 In dreadful opposition the wild winds
 Rend the vex'd air; the boist'rous billows rise
 Confounding sea and sky; the impetuous storm
 Rolls all its terrible fury on my head.
 Seest thou this, awful Themis; and thou, Ether,
 Through whose pure azure floats the general stream
 Of liquid light—see you what wrongs I suffer!

AGAMEMNON.

In this tragedy Æschylus not only manifests his powerful sway over the sources of pity and terror, but also the superior skill which he occasionally displays in the construction of his dramas; the system of the poet throughout is exceedingly judicious, there is a marked beginning, middle, and end; every scene affords some hint to keep our attention alive, and to prepare us for the event. The opening speech of the watchman looking out for the fiery signal, so long expected, which was to denote the fall of Troy, and its sudden appearance, form a picturesque introduction to the subse-

quent occurrences. The arrival of the Herald, which removes all doubt as to the import of the signal. The return of Agamemnon, the head of the Grecian confederacy, covered with glory, to the city and throne of his ancestors, with an amiable dignity around him, which causes an interest in his favour and grief for his fate. The character of his wife Clytemnestra is very strongly marked, a high spirited, revengeful, and perfidious woman; indeed she is represented as too implacably ferocious and hypocritical.¹ The part of Cassandra forms the surpassing beauty of this drama; it is original in conception, and perfect in execution. As a prophetess she gives every mark of inspiration—as a beautiful and captive princess, the daughter of Priam, and the sister of Hector, her grief is plaintive, lively, and piercing, yet she goes to meet death, which she clearly foretels, with a firmness worthy of her illustrious family. When attention is first directed to her she appears deeply dejected; Clytemnestra, after vain endeavours to extract answers from her to questions harshly put, disdainfully retires irritated by her inflexible silence; in a few moments the tongue of the prophetic princess becomes unloosened—the past crimes of the house of Atreus depicted in fearful visions throng her excited imagination, and she points by expressive imagery, to its future fortunes. A change comes over the spirit of her dream, fresh images portending the approaching assassination of Agamemnon, by turns excite and terrify, animate and subdue her. The cadence of the verse in these plaintive passages, assumes the flow of elegy. At length exhausted by the violence of her feelings, Cassandra quits the scene, when the cries of the dying Agamemnon from within,

¹ Our own dramatist in *Lady Macbeth* has greatly improved upon the character of Clytemnestra. The former shrinks for a moment from her stern purpose, and afterwards pines beneath the stings of a guilty conscience; but in Clytemnestra there are no such relentings, her bad qualities are represented so strongly, that she is beyond the verge of sympathy.

alarm and agitate the chorus. After a short pause Clytemnestra is discovered standing over the corpse of her husband, still holding in her hand the instrument of death; and in her language developing every sentiment of a haughty implacable spirit. It has justly been said that if the *Agamemnon* were the only tragedy of its author, it would entitle him to a place in the first rank of genius.

Watchman.

Ye fav'ring gods, relieve me from this toil :
 Fix'd, as a dog, on Agamemnon's roof
 I watch the live-long year, observing hence
 The host of stars, that in the spangled skies
 Take their bright stations, and to mortals bring
 Winter and summer ; radiant rulers, when
 They set, or rising glitter through the night.
 There now I watch, if haply I may see
 The blazing torch, whose flame brings news from Troy,
 The signal of its ruin : these high hopes,
 My royal mistress, thinking on her lord,
 Feeds in her heart.—Blaze, thou bright flame,
 Herald of joy, blaze through the gloomy shades.
 And it does blaze.—Hail, thou auspicious flame,
 That streaming through the night denoucest joy,
 Welcom'd with many a festal dance in Argos !
 In the queen's ear I'll holla this, and rouse her
 From her soft couch with speed, that she may teach
 The royal dome to echo with the strains
 Of choral warblings, greeting this bless'd fire,
 Bright sign that Troy is taken.

Chorus.

The tenth slow year rolls on, since great in arms
 The noble sons of Athens, each exalted
 To majesty and empire, royal brothers
 Led hence a thousand ships, the Argive fleet,
 Big with the fate of Priam and of Troy.

CLYTEMNESTRA, CHORUS, HERALD.

Herald.

Hail, thou paternal soil of Argive earth !
 In the fair light of the tenth year to thee
 Return'd, from the sad wreck of many hopes
 This one I sav'd ; sav'd from despair ev'n this ;
 For never thought I in this honour'd earth
 To share in death the portion of a tomb.
 Hail then, lov'd earth ! hail, thou bright sun ! and thou,
 Great guardian of my country, supreme Jove !

Clytemnestra.

Joy to thee, herald of the Argive host !

Herald.

For joy like this, death were a cheap exchange.

Clytemnestra.

Strong thy affection to thy native soil.

Herald.

So strong the tear of joy starts from my eye.

Clytemnestra.

What hath this sweet infection reach'd ev'n you ?

Herald.

Beyond the pow'r of language have I felt it.

Clytemnestra.

The fond desire of those, whose equal love—

Herald.

This of the army say'st thou, whose warm love
 Streams to this land ? Is this thy fond desire ?

Clytemnestra.

Such that I oft have breath'd the secret sigh.

Herald.

Whence did the army cause this anxious sadness ?

Clytemnestra.

Silence I long have held a healing balm.¹

¹ In the arms of Ægisthus, she had forgotten her duty to her absent husband.

After the return of Agamemnon, and his first meeting with Clytemnestra, where she with great hypocrisy professes joy at his return; the captive Cassandra is invited to enter the palace, but remains silent, and grief stricken; at length she speaks—

CASSANDRA AND CHORUS.

Cassandra.

Apollo, O Apollo, fatal leader,
Yet once more, God, thou ledest me to ruin!

Chorus.

She seems prophetic of her own misfortunes,
Retaining, though a slave, the divine spirit.

Cassandra.

Apollo, O Apollo, fatal leader,
Ah, whither hast thou led me? to what house?

Chorus.

Is that unknown? let me declare it then;
This is the royal mansion of th' Atridæ.

Cassandra.

It is a mansion hated by the gods,
Conscious to many a foul and horrid deed;
A slaughter-house, that reeks with human gore.

Chorus.

This stranger seems, like a nice scented hound,
Quick in the track of blood, which she will find.

Cassandra.

These are convincing proofs.—Look there, look there,
Whilst pity drops a tear, the children butcher'd.

Chorus.

Thy fame, prophetic virgin, we have heard—
We know thy skill; but wish no prophets now.

Cassandra.

Ye pow'rs of heav'n, what does she now design?
What new and dreadful deed of woe is this?

Cassandra.

The scent of blood and death breathes from this house.

Chorus.

The victims now are bleeding at the altar.

Cassandra.

'Tis such a smell as issues from the tomb.

Chorus.

This is no Syrian odour in the house.

Cassandra.

Such tho' it be, I enter, to bewail
My fate and Agamemnon's. To have liv'd,
Let it suffice. And think not, gen'rous strangers,
Like the poor bird that flutters o'er the bough
Thro' fear I linger. But my dying words
You will remember, when her blood shall flow
For mine, woman's for woman's; and for the man's¹
For his that falls by his accursed wife.—

Chorus.

Thy fate, poor sufferer, fills my eyes with tears.

Cassandra.

Yet once more let me raise my mournful voice;
Thou sun, whose rising beams shall bless no more
These closing eyes! You whose vindictive rage
Hangs o'er my hated murderers, Oh, avenge me,
Though, a poor slave, I fall an easy prey,
This is the state of man: in prosperous fortune
A shadow, passing light, throws to the ground
Joy's baseless fabric; in adversity
Comes malice with a sponge moisten'd in gall,²
And wipes each beauteous character away:
More than the first this melts my soul to pity.

¹ Meaning Ægisthus, the partner of Clytemnestra in guilt.

² The truth and pathetic beauty of these exquisite lines have never been excelled; their appeal to the heart is irresistible.

Agamemnon, within.

Oh, I am wounded with a deadly blow !

Semichorus.

List, list ! What cry is this of wounds and death ?

Agamemnon,

Wounded again !—Oh, basely, basely murder'd.

Semichorus.

'Tis the king's cry ; the dreadful deed is doing.

CLYTEMNESTRA, CHORUS.

Clytemnestra.

To many a fair speech suited to the times,
If my words now be found at variance,
I shall not blush. For when the heart conceives
Thoughts of deep vengeance on a foe, what means
T' achieve the deed more certain, than to wear
The form of friendship, and with circling wiles
Enclose him in th' insuperable net ?
This was no hasty, rash-conceiv'd design ;
But form'd with deep, premeditated thought,
Incens'd with wrongs ; and often have I stood,
T' assay the execution, where he fell ;
And plann'd it so, for I with pride avow it,
He had no pow'r t' escape, or to resist,
Entangl'd in the gorgeous robe, that shone
Fatally rich. I struck him twice, and twice
He groan'd, and died. * *

Chorus.

We are astonish'd at thy daring words.
Thus vaunting o'er the ruins of thy husband.

Clytemnestra.

Me, like a witless woman, wouldst thou fright ?
I tell thee, my firm soul disdains to fear.
Be thou dispos'd t' applaud, or censure me,

I reckon it not : there Agamemnon lies,
 My husband slaughter'd by this hand : I dare
 Avow his death, and justify the deed.

Chorus.

What poison hath the baleful-teeming earth,
 Or the chaf'd billows of the foamy sea,
 Giv'n thee for food, or mingled in thy cup,
 To work thee to this frenzy ? Thy curs'd hand
 Hath struck, hath slain. For this thy country's wrath
 Shall in just vengeance burst upon thy head,
 And with abhorrence drive thee from the city.

Clytemnestra.

And dost thou now denounce upon my head,
 Vengeance, and hate, and exile ? 'Gainst this man
 Urging no charge ? yet he without remorse,
 As if a lamb that wanton'd in his pastures
 Were doom'd to bleed, could sacrifice his daughter,
 (For whose dear sake I felt a mother's pains)
 T' appease the winds of Thrace. Should not thy voice
 Adjudge this man to exile, in just vengeance,
 For such unholy deeds ? Scarce hast thou heard
 What I have done, but sentence is pronounc'd,
 And that with rigour too. But mark me well,
 I boldly tell thee, that I bear a soul
 Prepar'd for either fortune ; if thy hand
 Be stronger, use thy pow'r : but if the gods
 Prosper my cause, be thou assur'd, old man,
 Thou shalt be taught a lesson of discretion.

Chorus.

Aspiring are thy thoughts, and thy proud vaunts
 Swell with disdain ; ev'n yet thy madding mind
 Is drunk with slaughter ; with a savage grace
 The thick blood stains thine eye. But soon thy friends
 Faithless shall shrink from thy unshelter'd side,
 And leave thee to just vengeance, blow for blow.

Clytemnestra.

Hear then this solemn oath. By that revenge,
 Which for my daughter I have greatly taken ;
 By the dread powers of Ate and Erinnyes,
 To whom my hand devoted him a victim
 Without a thought of fear I range these rooms,
 Whilst present to my aid Ægisthus stands,
 As he hath stood guarding my social hearth ;
 He is my shield, my strength, my confidence.
 Here lies my base betrayer, who at Troy
 Could revel in the arms of each Chryseis ;
 He, and his captive minion ; she that mark'd
 Portents and prodigies, and with ominous tongue
 Presag'd the Fates ; a wanton harlotry,
 True to the rower's benches : their just meed
 Have they received.—See where he lies ; and she,
 That like the swan warbled her dying notes,
 His paranymp^h lies with him, ' to my bed
 Leaving the darling object of my wishes.

The other tragedies extant of Æschylus are the Suppliants—The Seven Chiefs against Thebes—The Choephoræ—The Furies—The Persians.

The subject of the Suppliants is the landing of Danaus and his daughters in Argos ; the action or incident, turns principally on the question, whether Pelasgus will receive them with hospitality ? The daughters of Danaus

¹ There is much malignity and falsehood in this speech of Clytemnestra ; it was only in obedience to the command of the oracle, that Agamemnon with the greatest reluctance consented that Iphigenia his daughter should be sacrificed to Diana at Aulia, to obtain a favourable wind for the Greek fleet going to the Trojan war. When the priest was going to strike the fatal blow, Iphigenia suddenly disappeared, and a goat of uncommon size and beauty was found in her place, which was offered instead of her. She afterwards became priestess to Diana at Tauris.—Cassandra was as amiable and virtuous, as she was unfortunate.

compose the chorus, and are drawn with a firmness becoming their high rank, tempered with modest sensibility. The provident wisdom of their father, the calm and firm dignity of Pelasgus, the pious sentiments and chasteness of feeling, are pleasing to all who admire the gracious simplicity of ancient manners. It is however a drama devoid of art in its construction, and without a tragical conclusion. The Seven Chiefs against Thebes, founded on the story of Eteocles and Polynices, the sons of Œdipus and Jocasta, was a favourite piece both with the Grecian public, and its author. It gave birth to three of the finest poems of antiquity, the *Antigone* of Sophocles, the *Phœnissæ* of Euripides, and the *Thebaid* of Statius. This tragedy has all the bold painting, with which we might expect his martial genius would embellish such a subject. The characters of the seven chiefs who command in the attack, are finely marked and varied, and their impetuous courage is well contrasted with the calm determination of those appointed to oppose them. Longinus has remarked on the sublimity of the dialogue; it is worthy of a brave young monarch, Eteocles arming in defence of his crown, life, and honour; and Plutarch quotes an opinion of Gorgias the sophist, that Mars inspired this splendid piece, which for glowing lyrical inspiration, energy of sentiment and expression, picturesque imagery, and description, is not surpassed by any drama, ancient or modern. The shields of six of the chiefs are charged with armorial bearings, expressive of their characters, and as regular as if they had been marshalled by a herald at arms. This appears to have been the earliest era when these devices were used. The *Choephoræ*—There is considerable art in the development of the plot of this tragedy, and in this respect it is superior to most of the others; but it fails in comparison with the *Electra* of Sophocles, of which the subject is the same. The chorus in the play of Agamemnon had expressed abhorrence of his murder to Clytemnestra and Ægisthus, and threatened them with the

anger of the gods and the vengeance of Orestes, the son of Agamemnon, which is here executed. The character of Orestes is drawn as that of a brave and daring man, with a high sense of honour, and a reverence for the gods; we find him deeply sensible of the horror of the act he is obliged to perpetrate in the destruction of his mother; and it is with difficulty that the express command of Apollo, a promise of his protection, and a denunciation of the severest punishment should he dare to disobey, can induce him to accomplish the deed. The character of Electra, his sister, is that of a fierce and determined, but a generous and virtuous woman; her motives for revenge were a sense of justice and strong affection for her father. After she had given her brother a spirited account of Agamemnon's murder, she adds a short relation of the indignities offered to the dead body, and then mentions the continual insults and barbarous treatment she received from her ungentle mother, urging him to punish her proud oppressors. The chorus, who enter warmly into the interests of Electra and Orestes, after the deed is done, resume the softer sentiments of humanity, and lament the fate of Clytemnestra and Ægisthus, whilst the immediate remorse and madness of Orestes after he had committed the act, form one of the finest sketches of a great master.

The Furies, or Eumenides. The introduction to the Eumenides, or Furies, represents the priestess of the temple of the Pythian Apollo entering the shrine to take her seat at the oracular fane, when beholding Orestes beneath the dome in the posture of a suppliant, surrounded by the Furies asleep, who pursue him day and night on account of his mother's murder, she returns affrighted. The number of this horrible sisterhood on the Athenian stage amounted to fifty, and the consternation arising from their hideous figures, yells, and gestures, had such an effect upon the women and children, that the state by an express law reduced the persons of the chorus to fifteen, and finally to twelve.

Popular superstition in the classical, as in the Gothic ages, conjured up the ghosts of the murdered, to haunt the steps of the murderer; so that the apparition of the stern shade of Clytemnestra which is introduced rousing the Furies, and invoking vengeance, is quite in keeping with the appalling picture.—The Eumenides, like the Suppliants, is without a tragic close, and loses vigour towards the conclusion. Orestes is acquitted by Minerva at her temple in Athens; the Furies are soothed by the promise of reverence and offerings, in return for which they agree to bless and watch over the prosperity of Athens. The Persians—The subject of this piece is the triumph of confederated Greece, over the immense force collected by Xerxes for its subjugation. The scene is laid in Persia at Susa, before the ancient structure appropriated to the great council of state, and near the tomb of Darius. It commences by a description of the magnitude of the invading host, and the splendour of the armies and chiefs composing it. The strain of the chorus is interrupted by the arrival of a Persian messenger, with the dreadful intelligence of its complete rout. Atossa, the mother of Xerxes, and widow of Darius, and the chorus, break forth into grief and lamentation; in their despair, they invoke the shade of Darius to appear and aid them with counsel. The spirit of the departed monarch obeys the summons, and after joining in their sorrows, advises that no further attempt should be made against Greece. His entry and departure, though not devoid of mystery and thrilling accompaniments, are too much in the style of an ordinary mortal; and nothing results from the incident of sufficient importance to justify resorting to supernatural agency. The arrival of Xerxes, who gives way to furious grief, concludes the drama. There is not much art in the construction of this piece, nor particular merit in the dialogue. The facts closely coincide with the narrative of Herodotus; poetry has however invested them with its brightest hues, and has rarely kindled into en-

thusiasm in commemoration of a martial exploit more glorious, or momentous in its consequences. This tragedy is said to have been written by Æschylus eight years after the battle of Salamis, whilst the memory of it was yet recent. The poet had retired to the court of Hiero, king of Syracuse, and it was to gratify that monarch that it was first exhibited.

Sophocles flourished 472 B. C.

This most excellent tragic writer was born at Colone, a village of Attica, about 497 B. C.; although his parents were humble, he received a good education, and is said to have shown early indications of genius, and an aptitude for the higher branches of literature. As the profession of arms was at that period more honourable than any other, Sophocles entered the army at the usual age, and served under the great Pericles. His valour and conduct were so conspicuous that in a short time he was appointed to high military dignity, and his services in the field were rewarded by his fellow citizens, who raised him to the office of Archon, the duties of which he executed with credit and propriety. Allusion has already been made to Sophocles as a successful rival of Æschylus; he was just rising into notice when the fame of the latter approached its maturity; the first mention of him is, that he was selected for his personal accomplishments to form one of the chorus of distinguished youths, who sung a pæan round the public trophy erected in Athens, in honour of the battle of Marathon; Æschylus being one of the most distinguished heroes then hailed by the grateful plaudits of his countrymen.

The first appearance of Sophocles as a dramatic writer left no doubt of the splendour of his talents, and at twenty-nine years of age he obtained the prize, not only over many experienced competitors, but even over Æschylus, his former friend and preceptor. Inferior in the sublime and terrible, and seldom rivalling him in lyrical

composition, Sophocles excelled in the judicious selection of his incidents, and in the skilful development of his plots. Although he painted men rather as they ought to be, than as they were, yet his standard of perfection was not so far above reality as to leave his pictures ideal. He displays great knowledge of the human heart, while the simplicity and chastity of his style give the greater force to the occasional strokes of the sublime. His *Oedipus* is considered the most perfect production of the Greek stage. In the words of Dr. Francklin, "Sophocles may with great truth be called the prince of ancient dramatic poets; his fables (at least, of all those tragedies now extant) are interesting and well chosen, his plots regular and well-conducted, his sentiments elegant, noble, and sublime, his incidents natural, his diction simple, his manners and characters striking, equal, and unexceptionable, his choruses well adapted to the subject, his moral reflections pertinent and useful, and his numbers in every part sweet and harmonious. The warmth of his imagination is so tempered by the perfection of his judgment, that his spirit however animated never wanders into licentiousness; whilst at the same time the fire of his genius seldom suffers the uninteresting parts of his tragedy to sink into coldness and insipidity. His peculiar excellence seems to lie in the descriptive; and, exclusive of his dramatic powers, he is certainly a greater poet than either of his illustrious rivals."¹ Sophocles is believed to have written one hundred and twenty tragedies, only seven of which are now remaining. He very seldom or never acted himself in any of his plays, as *Æschylus* and *Euripides* were accustomed to do, his voice being too weak and low for the stage, though he was always present at the representation, and received the applauses of the audience, on his entering and quitting the theatre. He was crowned twenty times, and never left

¹ *Æschylus* and *Euripides*.

his native country, to which he took every opportunity of showing his sincere attachment.

The domestic life of Sophocles was less fortunate than his public career. As he lived to a very advanced age, his children became impatient for the possession of his fortune, and summoned him before the judges, representing him to be in a state of dotage and incapable of conducting his affairs. The old man appeared in court to repel this charge, and producing the tragedy of *Œdipus Coloneus*, which he had just finished, read¹ it, and then asked his judges if the author of such a work could be justly taxed with insanity. The judges, indignant at the imputation against him, confirmed him in the possession of his rights, dissolved the assembly, and conducted him home in triumph. His death at the age of ninety-one is said to have been occasioned by excessive joy at obtaining a prize at the Olympic games. The Athenians erected a splendid monument to his memory, on which was engraved a swarm of bees, in allusion to the appellation usually given to him of the Attic Bee — on account of the sweetness and harmony of his verses.

ELECTRA.

The subject of this tragedy is the same as the *Chœphoræ* of *Æschylus*, and a comparison between the two serves forcibly to illustrate the improvements introduced by Sophocles. In that of *Æschylus*, *Orestes*, and his sister *Electra*, almost immediately recognise each other; and this discovery made, the catastrophe ensues with obvious facility; but in the drama of Sophocles the interest is deeply excited by the suspension of this recognition, which leads to a scene of exquisite pathos and tenderness, the lamentation of *Electra* over the urn containing the supposed ashes of her brother. The concluding act of the piece in which *Ægysthus* on lifting up the veil from the corpse which he

¹ The word ought properly to be written *redde*.

believed to be that of Orestes, and which petrified him at beholding the features of Clytemnestra, is one of the most truly dramatic incidents that can be imagined.


The scene is just before the gates of the palace of Ægisthus; at the back is represented a view of the two cities of Argos and Mycenæ, the temple of Juno, and the grove of Io. As the Greeks spared no expense in the decoration of their theatres, the appearance must have been noble and magnificent. After Agamemnon had been assassinated by his wife, Orestes then a child, was preserved by his sister Electra, who privately had him conveyed to the court of Strophius, king of Phocis, who treated him with great kindness, and had him educated with his son Pylades, with whom he contracted an indissoluble friendship. On coming to years of maturity, Orestes, together with Pylades, and his governor, visited the city of Mycenæ, and by a report of his death, deluded the vicious pair into a fatal security. Having at length discovered himself to Electra, who willingly co-operated with him, he killed his mother during the absence of Ægisthus, who on his return also received the punishment of his crimes.

ORESTES, PYLADES, GOVERNOR OF ORESTES.

Governor.

O son of great Atrides ! he who led
Embattled Greece to Troy's devoted walls ;
At length behold what thy desiring eyes
So long have sought, behold thy native soil,
Thy much-lov'd Argos, and the hallow'd grove
Of Io,¹ frantic maid : on this side lies

¹ Io, the daughter of Inachus, who was transformed into a heifer by Jupiter to conceal her from the rage of Juno, who discovered, and placed her under the watch of Argus, and afterwards sent a gad-fly to sting her into madness. The story is told in the first book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.



The Lycian forum ; on the left, the fane
 Of Juno far renown'd : behold ! we come
 To rich Mycenæ, and the slaught'rous house
 Of Pelops' hapless race, from whose sad walls
 Long since I bore thee, at thy sister's hand
 Gladly receiv'd, and with paternal care
 To this bless'd day have foster'd up thy youth,
 Till riper years should give thee to return
 And pay with dire revenge thy father's murder.

ORESTES, PYLADES, (WITH ATTENDANTS) ELECTRA, CHORUS.

Orestes.

Say, virgins, if by right instruction led
 This way, I tend to—

Chorus.

Whither wouldst thou go ?

Orestes.

The palace of Ægisthus.

Chorus.

Stranger, well
 Wert thou directed, thou art there already.

Orestes.

Who then amongst your train shall kindly speak
 A friend's approach, who comes with joyful news
 Of highest import ?

Chorus.

Be that office her's (*pointing to Electra,*)
 Who bound by nature's ties it best befits.

Orestes.

Go then, and say from Phocis are arriv'd,
 Who beg admittance to the king.

Electra.

Alas !

And com'st thou then to prove the dreadful tale
 Already told ?

Orestes.

What you have heard I know not,
But of Orestes came I here to speak,
By Strophius' command.

Electra.

What is it? say,
O how I dread thy message!

Orestes. (*showing the urn.*)
Here behold

His poor remains—

Electra.

O lost, undone Electra!
'Tis then too plain, and misery is complete.

Orestes.

If for Orestes thus thy sorrows flow,
Know that within this urn his ashes lie.

Electra.

Do they indeed? Then let me, by the gods
I do intreat thee, let me snatch them from thee;
Let me embrace them, let me weep my fate,
And mourn our hapless race.

Orestes.

Give her the urn,
Whoe'er she be; for not with hostile mind
She craves the boon; perhaps some friend; perhaps
By blood united.

Electra. (*taking the urn.*)

O ye dear remains
Of my Orestes, the most lov'd of men!
How do I see thee now! how much unlike
What my fond hopes presag'd, when last we parted!
I sent thee forth with all the bloom of youth
Fresh on thy cheek; and now, O dismal change!
I bear thee in these hands an empty shade.
Would I had died ere I had sent thee hence,

Ere I had sav'd thee from the tyrant's hand !
 Would thou hadst died thyself that dreadful day,
 And join'd thy murder'd father in the tomb,
 Rather than thus a wretched exile fallen,
 Far from thy sister, in a foreign land !
 I was not there with pious hands to wash
 Thy breathless corpse, or from the greedy flame
 To gather up thy ashes ; what have all
 My pleasing toils, my fruitless cares avail'd,
 Ev'n from thy infant years ; that as a mother
 I watch'd thee still, and as a mother lov'd ?
 I would not trust thee to a servant's hand,
 But was myself the guardian of thy youth,
 Thy dear companion : all is gone with thee.
 Alas ! thy death like the devouring storm,
 Hath borne down all : my father is no more,
 And thou art gone, and I am going too.
 Our foes rejoice ; our mother, mad with joy,
 Smiles at our mis'ries ; that unnatural mother,
 She whom thou oft hast promis'd to destroy ;
 But cruel fate hath blasted all my hopes,
 And for my dear Orestes left me nought
 But this poor shadow. O ! th' accursed place,
 Where I had sent thee ! O my hapless brother !
 Thou hast destroy'd Electra : take me then,
 O, take me to thee ! let this urn enclose
 My ashes too, and dust to dust¹ be join'd,
 That we may dwell together once again ;
 In life united by one hapless fate,
 I would not wish in death to be divided :
 The dead are free from sorrows.

Chorus.

Fair Electra !

Do not indulge thy grief ; but, O ! remember,

¹ *Dust to dust.* It is in the original, *την μηδεν εις το μηδεν*, "Nothing to nothing."

Sprung from a mortal like thyself, Orestes
Was mortal too; that we are mortal all.

Orestes. (*aside.*)

What shall I say? I can refrain no longer.

Electra.

Why this emotion?

Orestes. (*looking at Electra.*)

Can it be Electra

That lovely form?

Electra.

It is indeed that wretch!

Orestes.

O dreadful!

Electra.

Stranger, dost thou weep for me?

Orestes.

By impious hands to perish thus!

Electra.

For me

Doubtless thou weep'st, for I am chang'd indeed.

Orestes.

Of nuptial rites, and each domestic joy
To live depriv'd!

Electra.

Why dost thou gaze on me?

Orestes.

Alas! I did not know I was so wretched.

Electra.

Why, what hath made thee so?

Orestes.

I see thy woes.

Electra.

Not half of them.

Orestes.

Can there be worse than these?

Electra.

To live with murderers?

Orestes.

What murderers, whom?

Electra.

The murderers of my father; bound to serve them.

Orestes.

Who binds thee?

Electra.

One who calls herself a mother;—

A name she little merits.

Orestes.

But say, how?

Doth she withhold the means of life, or act

With brutal violence to thee?

Electra.

Both, alas!

Are my hard lot; she tries a thousand means

To make me wretched.

Orestes.

And will none assist,

Will none defend thee?

Electra.

None. My only hope

Lies buried there.

Orestes.

O! how I pity thee!

Electra.

'Tis kindly done; for none will pity me,

None but thyself. Art thou indeed a stranger,

Or doth some nearer tie unite our sorrows?

Orestes.

I could unfold a tale; but say, these virgins,

May I depend on them?

Electra.

They are our friends,
And faithful all.

Orestes.

Then lay the urn aside,
And I will tell thee.

Electra.

Do not take it from me ;
Do not, dear stranger.

Orestes.

But I must indeed !

Electra.

Do not, I beg thee.

Orestes.

Come, you'll not repent it.

Electra.

O my poor brother ! if thy dear remains
Are wrested from me, I am most unhappy.

Orestes.

No more ; thou must not grieve for him.

Electra.

Not grieve

For my Orestes ?

Orestes.

No ; you should not weep.

Electra.

Am I unworthy of him then ?

Orestes.

O, no !

But do not grieve.

Electra.

Not when I bear the ashes
Of my dear brother ?

Orestes.

But they are not there,
Unless by fiction, and a well-wrought tale
That hath deceiv'd thee.

Electra.

Where then is his tomb?

Orestes.

The living need none.

Electra.

Ha! what sayest thou?

Orestes.

Truth.

Electra.

Does he then live?

Orestes.

If I have life, he lives.

Electra.

And art thou he?

Orestes.

Look here, and be convinced;
This mark, 'tis from our father.

Electra.

O bless'd hour!

Orestes.

Bless'd indeed!

Electra.

Art thou then here?¹

Orestes.

I am.

¹ Aulus Gellius tells us that an actor named Polus having undertaken the part of Electra, in order to enter more fully into the character, brought upon the stage an urn containing the ashes of his son, which he wept over, and embraced as the ashes of Orestes; his performance was so exquisite that the audience forgetting it was a mere representation, were deeply moved, and melted into tears.

The concluding scene, discovers the body of Clytemnestra extended on a bier, but covered with a veil.

ORESTES, PYLADES, GOVERNOR OF ORESTES, ÆGISTHUS, ELECTRA,
AND A CROWD OF SPECTATORS FROM THE CITY.

Ægisthus.

What a sight is here !

O Deity supreme ! this could not be
But by thy will ; and whether Nemesis¹
Shall still o'ertake me for my crime, I know not.
Take off the veil, that I may view him well ;
He was by blood allied, and therefore claims
Our decent sorrows.

Orestes.

Take it off thyself :

'Tis not my office ; thee it best befits
To see and to lament.

Ægisthus.

And so it does,
And I will do it ; send Clytemnestra hither.
(*taking off the veil.*)

Orestes.

She is before thee.

Ægisthus.

Ha ! what do I see ?

Orestes.

Why what's the matter ? What affrights thee so ?
Do you not see him ?

Ægisthus.

In what dreadful snare
Am I then fallen ?

Orestes.

Dost thou not now behold
That thou art talking with the dead ?

¹ Nemesis, the goddess of vengeance.

Ægisthus.

Alas!

Too well I see it, and thou art—Orestes.

*Orestes.*So great a prophet thou,¹ and guess so ill!

CEDIPUS, KING OF THEBES.

This tragedy has been considered both in ancient and modern times, as the most perfect production of the Grecian stage; and in perusing it, the reader cannot fail to observe the splendid talent of Sophocles. The judicious preservation of the Unities, to use the language of criticism, produces such correctness, with a connection and dependence of the various incidents on each other, that circumstances appear to arise in their natural order, so as to impress on the mind the idea of reality. At the first appearance of *Cedipus* we are warmly interested in his favour; he is a beneficent and honoured sovereign, anxious for the welfare of his kingdom, and prizing it as his own life. As a man, he is generous, intrepid, and wise; as a husband, affectionate and mild; and as a father, tender and indulgent. His anxious endeavours to discover the murderer of *Laius*, arise from his reverence of the oracle, and his own sense of justice: his further inquiries proceed from an exquisite sensibility. The poet to attain his end, has with much judgment blended this feeling with a fiery quality which blazes out on every occasion; and although it shows a generous rather than a ferocious mind, naturally leads him into the evils which the oracle and his destiny had rendered inevitable: it was this disposition which instigated his abrupt departure from Corinth, inflamed his resentment at the insult offered to him in the road "where three ways met," and from which fatal en-

¹ This is a sneer of *Orestes*, on his being discovered by *Ægisthus*, who had the reputation of a prophet.

counter with his father, all his misfortunes arose. His anger against Tiresias was excited by the prophet's refusal at once to mention the guilty person; he considered his silence injurious to himself, and to his country; when at length Tiresias was provoked to speak, and pronounced Œdipus himself to be the murderer, conscious of his innocence, (for he then believed himself innocent), detesting the malignity of the accusation, persuaded from concurring circumstances that the prophet had been suborned by Creon; the one appeared to him as an impostor, and the other as a designing villain, who had fabricated the charge to deprive him of his crown and life; he is enraged but not inexorable at the intercession of his friends, even whilst under such conviction he generously dismisses Creon with impunity. The stroke that inflicts the deepest wound on a virtuous and ingenuous nature, is the accusation of guilt. As circumstances opened, which gave the charge an increasing force that alarmed even his own mind; neither nature nor reason could suffer so animated a spirit to rest, till he had drawn aside the mysterious veil, and discovered all the horrors of his fate. Where then was the guilt of Œdipus? We are to look for it, not in his conduct, but in his fate. He was, as Seneca beautifully expresses it, *Phæbi reus*. Before his birth Apollo had foretold that he should murder his father, and marry his mother; and his destiny led him against every effort of a virtuous mind, involuntarily and unknowingly to accomplish the sad predictions of the oracle.

The scene is in front of the palace of Œdipus; before it an altar is erected, at the foot of which a number of young men of the highest quality in Thebes, with boughs of supplication in their hands, are prostrate on the earth; the high priest of Jupiter, with several others, and some old men, are preparing for a sacrifice; beyond there is a distant view of the two temples of Minerva, with their altars, and a large concourse of people standing round them. Œdipus

alarmed at the groans and lamentations of his people, comes out of his palace to inquire the cause of their distress; he calls his subjects, the progeny of Cadmus, who was the founder of Thebes, about two hundred years before his time.

ŒDIPUS, AND THE HIGH PRIEST OF JUPITER.

Œdipus.

O my lov'd sons! the youthful progeny
Of ancient Cadmus! wherefore sit you here,
And suppliant thus, with sacred boughs adorn'd,
Crowd to our altars? Frequent sacrifice,
And prayers, and sighs, and sorrows, fill the land.
I could have sent to learn the fatal cause:
But see your anxious sov'reign comes himself
To know it all from you: behold your king,
Renown'd Œdipus. Do thou, old man,
(For best that office suits thy years) inform me,
Why you are come; is it the present ill
That calls you here, or dread of future woe?
Hard were indeed the heart that did not feel
For grief like yours, and pity such distress.
If there be aught that Œdipus can do
To serve his people, know me for your friend.

Priest.

O king! thou seest what numbers throng thy altars;
Here bending sad beneath the weight of years,
The hoary priests, here crowd the chosen youth
Of Thebes, with these a weak and suppliant train
Of helpless infants; last, in me behold
The minister of Jove: far off thou seest
Assembled multitudes, with laurel crown'd
To where Minerva's hallow'd temples rise
Frequent repair, or where Ismenus laves
Apollo's sacred shrine. Too well thou know'st
Thy wretched Thebes, with dreadful storms oppress'd,

Scarce lifts her head above the 'whelming flood :
 The teeming earth her blasted harvest mourns,
 And on the barren plain the flocks and herds
 Unnumber'd perish ; dire abortion thwarts
 The mother's hopes, and painful she brings forth
 The half-formed infant ; baleful pestilence
 Hath laid our city waste ; the fiery god
 Stalks o'er deserted Thebes ; whilst, with our groans
 Enrich'd, the gloomy god of Erebus
 Triumphant smiles. * *

ENTER CREON,¹ CHORUS.

Œdipus.

My dearest Creon !

O ! say, what answer bear'st thou from the god ;
 Or good, or ill ?

Creon.

Good, very good ; for know
 The worst of ills, if rightly used, may prove
 The means of happiness.

Œdipus.

What says my friend ?

This answer gives me naught to hope, or fear.

Creon.

Shall we retire, or would you that I speak
 In public here ?

Œdipus.

Before them all declare it :
 Their woes sit heavier on me than my own.

Creon.

Then mark what I have heard : the god commands
 That instant we drive forth the fatal cause

¹ Creon had been sent by Œdipus to Apollo's shrine at Delphi, to inquire the cause, and what ought to be done to relieve the misery of Thebes, and he was just returned.

Of this dire pestilence, nor nourish here
Th' accursed monster.

Œdipus.

Who? what monster? how
Remove it?

Creon.

Or by banishment, or death :
Life must be giv'n for life ; for yet his blood
Rests on the city.

Œdipus.

Whose? what means the god?

Creon.

O king! before thee Laius rul'd o'er Thebes.

Œdipus.

I know he did, though I did ne'er behold him.

Creon.

Laius was slain, and on his murderers
(So Phœbus says) we must have vengeance.

Œdipus.

Where?

Where are the murderers? who shall trace the guilt
Buried so long in silence?

Creon.

Here, he said,

Ev'n in this land : what's sought for may be found,
But truth unsearch'd for, seldom comes to light.

Œdipus.

How did he fall, and where? at home, abroad,
Died he at Thebes, or in a foreign land?

Creon.

He left his palace fame reports, to seek
Some oracle ; since that, we ne'er beheld him.

Œdipus.

But did no messenger return? not one

Of all his train, of whom we might inquire
Touching this murder ?

Creon.

One, and one alone,
Came back, who flying, 'scaped the general slaughter,
But nothing, save one little circumstance,
Or knew, or e'er related.

Ædipus.

What was that ?
Much may be learn'd from that : a little dawn
Of light appearing may discover all.

Creon.

Laius, attack'd by robbers, and oppress'd
By numbers, fell ;¹ such is his tale.

TIRESIAS THE PROPHET, ÆDIPUS, CHORUS.

Ædipus.

O sage Tiresias ! thou, who knowest all
That can be known, the things of heav'n above
And earth below ; whose mental eye beholds,
Blind as thou art, the state of dying Thebes,
And weeps her fate, to thee we look for aid,
On thee alone for safety we depend :
This answer, which perchance thou hast not heard,
Apollo gave. The plague, he said, should cease,
When those who murdered Laius were discover'd
And paid the forfeit of by ill-
Or banishment.



Tiresias.

Alas ! what misery it is to know
When knowledge is thus fatal ! O Tiresias !
Thou art undone. Would I had never come !

Œdipus.

What say'st thou ? whence this strange dejection ? speak !

Tiresias.

Let me be gone ; 'twere better for us both
That I retire in silence ; be advis'd.

Œdipus.

It is ingratitude to Thebes, who bore
And cherish'd thee ; it is unjust to all,
To hide the will of heaven.

Tiresias.

'Tis rash in thee
To ask, and rash I fear will prove my answer.

Chorus.

O ! do not, by the gods, conceal it from us ;
Suppliant we all request, we all conjure thee.

Tiresias.

What is decreed by heaven
Must come to pass, though I reveal it not.

Œdipus.

Still 'tis thy duty to inform us of it.

Tiresias.

I'll speak no more, not though thine anger swell
Ev'n to its utmost.

Œdipus.

Nor will I be silent.
I tell thee once for all, thou wert thyself
Accomplice in this deed ; nay more, I think,
But for thy blindness, wouldst with thy own hand
Have done it too.¹

¹ The unfortunate part of the character of Œdipus here opens itself ; we find him presumptuous, resentful, and suspicious, dimi-

Tiresias.

'Tis well; now hear Tiresias :
The sentence, which thou didst thyself proclaim,
Falls on thyself; henceforth shall never man
Hold converse with thee, for thou art accurs'd,
The guilty cause of this our city's woes.

Tiresias having left, Œdipus accuses Creon of being in league with the former to ruin him.

JOCASTA THE MOTHER, AND WIFE OF ŒDIPUS, ENTERS.

Jocasta.

Let not a fear perplex thee, Œdipus !
Mortals know nothing of futurity,
And these prophetic seers are all impostors ;
I'll prove it to thee. Know, then, Laius once,
Not from Apollo, but his priests, receiv'd
An oracle, which said, it was decreed
He should be slain by his own son, the offspring
Of Laius and Jocasta ; yet he fell
By strangers murder'd, for so fame reports,
By robbers in the place where three ways meet.
A son was born, but ere three days had pass'd
The infant's feet were bor'd ;¹ a servant took,
And left him on the pathless mountain's top,
To perish there ; thus Phœbus ne'er decreed
That he should kill his father, or that Laius,
Which much he fear'd, should by his son be slain.
Such is the truth of oracles ; henceforth
Regard them not. What heaven would have us know,
It can with ease unfold, and will reveal it.

nishing our pity for his misfortunes, and tending to reconcile us to his approaching fate.

¹ Œdipus received his name from this circumstance, it signifying swelled feet.

Œdipus.

What thou hast said, Jocasta, much disturbs me—
I tremble at it.¹

Jocasta.

Wherefore shouldst thou fear?

Œdipus.

Methought I heard thee say, Laius was slain
Where three ways meet.

Jocasta.

'Twas so reported then,
And is so still.

Œdipus.

Where happen'd the misfortune?

Jocasta.

In Phocis, where the roads unite that lead
To Delphi, and to Daulia.

Œdipus.

How long since?

Jocasta.

A little time ere you began to reign
O'er Thebes, we heard it.

Œdipus.

O almighty Jove!

What wilt thou do with me?

The arrival of a shepherd from Corinth, with the news that Polybus is dead, and that the Isthmian people² wished to choose Œdipus for their king, brings on the discovery that Œdipus is not the son of Polybus, as he believed himself, and becomes the means of displaying his guilt, and

¹ What Jocasta says to destroy the force of the oracle tends to confirm it, and increases the fears of Œdipus; this is one of the beauties in the plan on which the fable is conducted.

² The Isthmian people; the people of Corinth, so called from the famous Isthmus there.

involving him in ruin ; nothing, as Aristotle observes, can be more completely tragical. The queen, better acquainted with all the circumstances than Œdipus, and convinced of the dreadful accidents that had occurred, abruptly quits the stage, stupified and horror stricken, with the determination to destroy herself ; her silence and sudden departure are truly judicious, and a proof of the correct judgment of Sophocles.

THE OLD SHEPHERD, ŒDIPUS, SHEPHERD FROM CORINTH,
CHORUS.

Œdipus.

Now answer me, old man ! look this way, speak—
Didst thou belong to Laius ?

Old Shepherd.

Sir, I did,

No hirely slave, but in his palace bred,
I serv'd him long.

Œdipus.

What was thy business there ?

Old Shepherd.

For my life's better part I tended sheep.

Œdipus.

And whither didst thou lead them ?

Old Shepherd.

To Cithæron,

And to the neighb'ring plains.

Œdipus.

Behold this man ! (*pointing to the Shepherd of Corinth*)

Dost thou remember to have seen him ?

Old Shepherd.

Whom ?

What hath he done ?

Œdipus.

Him, who now stands before thee,

Call'st thou to mind, or converse or connection

Between you in times past ?

Old Shepherd.

I cannot say

I recollect it now.

Shepherd of Corinth.

I do not wonder

He should forget me, but I will recall
Some facts of ancient date; he must remember
When on Cithæron we together fed
Our sev'ral flocks, in daily converse join'd,
From spring to autumn, and when winter bleak
Approach'd, retired: I to my little cot
Convey'd my sheep, he to the palace led
His fleecy care. Canst thou remember this?

Old Shepherd.

I do, but that is long since.

Shepherd of Corinth.

It is;

But say, good shepherd; canst thou call to mind
An infant, whom thou didst deliver to me,
Requesting me to breed him as my own.

Old Shepherd.

Ha! wherefore ask'st thou this?

Shepherd of Corinth, (pointing to Œdipus.)

Behold him here,

That very child.

Old Shepherd.

O! say it not; away!

Perdition on thee!

Œdipus.

Why reprove him thus?

Thou art thyself to blame, old man.

Old Shepherd.

In what

Am I to blame, my Lord?

Œdipus.

Thou wilt not speak
Touching this boy.

Old Shepherd.

Alas, poor man ! he knows not
What he hath said.

Œdipus.

If not by softer means
To be persuaded, force shall wring it from thee.

Old Shepherd.

Treat not an old man harshly.

Œdipus. (to the Attendants.)

Bind his hands.

Old Shepherd.

Wherefore, my Lord ? What wouldst thou have me do ?

Œdipus.

That child he talks of, didst thou give it to him ?

Old Shepherd.

I did, and would to heaven I then had died !

Œdipus.

Die soon thou shalt, unless thou tell'st it all.

Old Shepherd.

Say, rather if I do.

Œdipus.

This fellow means
To trifle with us, by his dull delay.

Old Shepherd.

I do not ; said I not I gave the child ?

Œdipus.

Whence came the boy ? was he thy own, or who
Did give him to thee ?

Old Shepherd.

From another hand
I had received him.

Œdipus.

Say, what hand? from whom?
Whence came he?

Old Shepherd.

Do not, by the gods I beg of thee,
Do not enquire.

Œdipus.

Force me to ask again,
And thou shalt die.

Old Shepherd.

In Laius' palace born.

Œdipus.

Son of a slave, or of the king?

Old Shepherd.

Alas!

'Tis death for me to speak.

Œdipus.'

And me to hear;

Yet say it.

Old Shepherd.

He was called the son of Laius;
But ask the queen, for she can best inform thee.

Œdipus.

Did she then give the child to thee?

Old Shepherd.

She did.

Œdipus.

For what?

Old Shepherd.

To kill him.

Œdipus.

Kill her child! inhuman
And barb'rous mother!

Old Shepherd.

A dire oracle

Affrighted, and constrain'd her to it.

Œdipus.

Ha !

What oracle ?

Old Shepherd.

Which said, her son should slay

His parents.

Œdipus.

Wherefore gav'st thou then the infant
To this shepherd ?

Old Shepherd.

Pity mov'd me to it :

I hop'd he would have soon convey'd his charge
To some far distant country ; he, alas !
Preserv'd him but for misery and woe ;
For, O my Lord ! if thou indeed art he,
Thou art of all mankind the most unhappy.

Œdipus.

O me ! at length the mystery's unravell'd :
'Tis plain ; 'tis clear ; my fate is all determin'd.
Those are my parents who should not have been
Allied to me ; she is my wife, ev'n she,
Whom nature had forbidden me to wed :
I have slain him who gave me life, and now
Of thee, O light ! I take my last farewell ;
For Œdipus shall ne'er behold thee more.

Chorus.

STROPHE I.

O, hapless state of human race,
How quick the fleeting shadows pass
Of transitory bliss below,
When all is vanity and woe !
By thy example taught, O prince ! we see
Man was not made for true felicity.

ANTISTROPHE I.

Thou *Cædipus* ! beyond the rest
 Of mortals wert supremely bless'd ;
 Whom ev'ry hand conspir'd to raise,
 Whom ev'ry hand rejoic'd to praise ;
 When from the sphinx thy all-preserving hand
 Stretch'd forth its aid to save a sinking land.

STROPHE II.

Thy virtues rais'd thee to a throne,
 And grateful Thebes was all thy own :
 Alas ! how chang'd that glorious name !
 Lost are thy virtues and thy fame.

* *

The above is the fifth and last song or intermede of the chorus, who lament the fate of their unhappy master in a very affecting manner ; drawing from his example some moral reflections on the instability of human happiness, suitable to the occasion. The songs of the chorus throughout this play are to the last degree beautiful and pathetic.

The other tragedies extant of Sophocles are, *Cædipus Coloneus*—*Ajax*—*Philoctetes*—*Antigone*—and the *Trachiniæ*.

Cædipus Coloneus, or *Cædipus at Colonus*, is a continuation of *Cædipus*, king of Thebes. He is here represented as old and blind, banished from his realm, reduced to indigence, and wandering from city to city ; until he arrives at last, conducted by his daughter *Antigone*, at *Colonus*, a hill not far from Athens, where stood a temple and grove sacred to the furies,¹ or as they are styled, the venerable goddesses, where he is destined to die. The subject of this drama is simple, containing little more than a narration of the most remarkable circumstances attending the death of *Cædipus*. The principal emotion which it awakens in the breast of the reader is pity. The unshaken fortitude of the mind of


¹ *Alecto*, *Megæra*, and *Tisiphone*.

Œdipus, the dignity he sustains under his afflictions, demand our respect; but we feel a deeper sorrow for the exile at Colonus than we felt for the monarch at Thebes. Antigone, with cheerful and unremitting assiduity, attends her father in all his wanderings, begs his daily food for him, and mitigates his sorrows; she is a perfect example of tender affection and filial piety. Her sister Ismene, although she does not bear so prominent a part, appears in the same amiable light. An Athenian audience must have been highly gratified with the representation of their hero Theseus, whose frank and generous character is finely contrasted with that of the hypocritical and unfeeling Creon. Although a spirit of melancholy is diffused through most of the scenes of this drama, there are some of a stronger nature. Œdipus is not to die like common mortals, the fate of kingdoms depends upon his death, a blessing is to follow if the place be kept secret where his remains are buried; the closing scene is attended with circumstances of a sublime and awful nature.

Ajax.—The contest for the arms of Achilles, the decision in favour of Ulysses, the rage, madness, and death of Ajax, are the circumstances on which Sophocles founded this tragedy. The first scene, in which Minerva is brought forward, is absurd, and only redeemed by the fine reflection made by Ulysses at the sight of Ajax in his frenzy, or state of violent derangement.

“ I pity such distress,
For he is wedded to the worst of foes:
His hapless state reminds me of my own,
And tells me that frail mortals are no more
Than a vain image, and an empty shade.”

The whole of the subject is a fierce and terrible one, softened by the introduction of the mild but unfortunate Tecmessa, the wife of Ajax. Her first appearance is interesting,




her narrative decorous ; she exhibits an amiable gentleness to her loved and honoured husband. When she endeavours to dissuade him from his dreadful purpose of self-destruction, her arguments though impassioned, and enforced with the enthusiasm of eloquent grief, are still dictated by reason. Her lamentations over him, after he has fallen upon his sword, are the effusions of an affectionate and afflicted heart. The miseries of her own unprotected situation, and of her son's, rise before her in their gloomiest colours ; but she soon loses sight of them, and dwells with pathetic fondness on the virtues of the dead. Ajax, after he had recovered his senses, exhibits a deep melancholy ; conscious of his own worth, we find fixed resentment, shame, desperation, and inflexible resolution not to survive his lost glory : this part of the subject is animated with a stern grandeur. A pretended change is introduced, necessary for the accomplishment of his purpose, as it gives hope to his friends and quiets their minds ; it is the deceitful calm before a storm. On the death of Ajax, according to modern ideas, the drama should end ; the insults offered to him, however, and the afflictions of his friends, were not yet finished. To be deprived of the rites of sepulture was to the ancients more terrible than death itself, and the attempt occasions a further and deeper distress. It is believed that the political enmity of the Athenians to the Spartans and Argives, was the cause of an odious representation of Menelaus and Agamemnon, while it gave the poet an opportunity of introducing the affectionate and high-spirited Teucer, with the generous prudence of Ulysses.

Philoctetes.—Hercules, at his death on Mount Hyllus, bequeathed to his friend and companion Philoctetes, his invincible bow and arrows, with which the latter joined the armament of the Greeks with seven ships, against Troy. In their passage the fleet anchored at Chrysa, a small island in the Ægean sea ; and as Philoctetes was there, searching

for an altar on which Hercules in his expedition against Troy had sacrificed, he was wounded in the foot by the envenomed bite of a serpent, the consequence of which was a putrid and incurable ulcer; this became highly offensive, and its anguish forced from the unfortunate sufferer cries and groans which disturbed the Greek sacrifices. The fleet proceeded to Lemnos; on that wild coast Ulysses and Diomedes, at the command of Agamemnon and Menelaus, put him ashore when he was asleep, and barbarously continued their course without him. In this melancholy situation he remained till the tenth year of the war; Helenus then announced the decrees of fate to the Grecian chiefs, that Troy could not be conquered without the arrows of Hercules, in the possession of Philoctetes. Ulysses and Neoptolemus were dispatched with commands to bring him to the siege. The manner in which this expedition was conducted, and the means made use of by the artful Ulysses to gain the arrows, constitute the subject of the tragedy; which, although barren of dramatic incidents, and divested of theatrical ornament, abounds in open simplicity, strength of colouring, propriety of character and manners. The contrast is great and well supported between Ulysses and Neoptolemus; the former is prudent and versatile, even condescending to guile and artifice to gain his object; the latter is young, generous, and amiable, ambitious of the hero's glory, but averse to the statesman's fraud. Between these stands the unhappy Philoctetes, an object of pity and respect.

Antigone, Eteocles, and Polynices, sons of the unfortunate Oedipus, having an equal claim to the kingdom of Thebes, had agreed to divide the power, and to reign year by year alternately; but Eteocles having first ascended the throne, and tasting the sweets of sovereignty, broke the contract, and maintained himself in his position as sovereign. Polynices in revenge raised an Argive army, and attacked Thebes; a battle ensued, and after much slaughter on both sides, the




brothers agreed to decide their quarrel by single combat : they fought, and were slain by each other. After their death the kingdom devolved to their uncle Creon, whose first act of supreme power was an edict forbidding the rites of sepulture to Polynices as a traitor, and denouncing instant death to any who should dare to bury him. Here the action of the tragedy commences. The tender and virtuous Antigone, already so illustrious for her filial piety to her father, sets a bright example of affection to her brother and reverence to the gods ; animated with a sense of duty, and regardless of the menaces of a tyrant, she pays the last sad offices to the unhappy Polynices. This, and its dreadful consequences, the death of Antigone, that of Hæmon, who destroys himself for her loss, she having been his affianced bride, and the death of Eurydice, the wife of Creon, who kills herself on the news of the fatal catastrophe to her son, form the drama. Poetical justice is here strictly observed ; the unfortunate Creon suffers as a king, a father, and a husband, and notwithstanding his cruelty becomes at length an object of compassion. There is a circumstance here which illustrates the perfect propriety in the manner Sophocles conducts his tragedies. Eurydice on hearing the news of her son's death, and its melancholy circumstances, hurriedly retires in a silence more expressive of her deep grief, than clamorous lamentation. When Œdipus is discovered to be unknowingly the murderer of his father, Jocasta acts in the same manner. Sophocles (to speak in the language of Shakspeare) " never o'ersteps the modesty of nature." This drama has been much admired for the conduct of its plot, the justness of its characters, and the propriety of its sentiments ; it met with remarkable success on the Athenian stage, having been represented, according to Aristophanes the grammarian, thirty-two times, and procured for the author as a reward the government of Samos. Sophocles knew well for whom he wrote ; Thebes had deserted the cause of glory and of Greece in the Persian war, besides

being hostile to the Athenians; it must therefore have gratified that people, conscious of their own merit, and glowing with all the enthusiasm of civil liberty, to see their enemies represented under such contemptible circumstances as the slaves of a tyrant.

The Trachinæ, or Trachinian Virgins.—The titles of the ancient tragedies were usually given to them either from the persons concerned, the business of the drama, or the place where it was transacted. The appellation is given from Trachin, a town situated near mount Ceta in Thesaly; to this place Deianira had accompanied Hercules in his voluntary banishment, and remained under the protection of Ceyx the king, during the absence of her husband on his expedition to Eechalia. From its commencement as follows, Sophocles has been accused of an anachronism.

“ Of ancient fame, and long for truth receiv’d,
Hath been the maxim, that nor good, nor ill
Can mortal life be call’d before we die.”

The above observation is generally ascribed to Solon, who lived long after Deianira, the heroine of the piece; but as the remark is no less obvious than true, it is not surprising to find it quoted proverbially even in very early ages, Thus Solomon, in the 7th chapter of Ecclesiastes, at the 1st verse, in the same feeling, says, “ the day of a man’s death is better than the day of his birth,” for he knows not what shall happen to him in his life-time; indeed it would appear as if the ancient Greek authors were well acquainted with the Hebrew writings, the instances are so numerous where sentiments of a similar nature are expressed, and circumstances of a like character recorded in their works. Sophocles is said to have drawn his women as they ought to be, and Deianira is represented as a pattern of conjugal affection. In the most trying circumstance that affects the female heart, she is not without a deep feeling of the injury, and complains of it in secret to her female friends, but without



violent resentment or intemperate asperity. Her sole object is to recover the wandering love of Hercules; and the unfortunate measure which she takes, that of sending to him a poisoned robe in ignorance of its baneful qualities, brings on the dreadful catastrophe of the drama. As this measure could not with propriety be carried into execution without the assent of the chorus, and as the prudence of old age could not have approved of the plan, the poet has with judgment formed it of young and inexperienced virgins. The merit of this piece consists in the gradations of distress, from the plaintive melancholy of Deianira to the last agonies of Hercules. This tragedy gave rise to the *Hercules Furens* of Seneca, and the *Hercule Mourant* of Rotrou: the Latin and French poets have sadly deviated from the simplicity and beauty of the original.

Euripides flourished 455 B. C.

This great tragic author was born at Salamis 480 B. C. The immense army with which Xerxes invaded Greece, when he was advancing towards Attica, to revenge the defeat of his father's forces, and his signal failure, are recorded in history. The Athenians by the advice of Themistocles, retired with their effects to Salamis, Troezen, and Ægina. Among those who took refuge at Salamis, were Mnesarchus and Clito the parents of this poet, who is stated to have been born in that island, on the day in which the Grecians gained their memorable victory over the Persian fleet. The family of Euripides was one of rank and fortune; consequently no expense was spared in his education: he studied eloquence under Prodicus, ethics under Socrates, and philosophy under Anaxagoras. The events transmitted to us of the life of Euripides are few in number; and it appears more than probable, that he passed a great part of his time in that unambitious retirement from public affairs, which is the usual sphere of individuals deeply engaged in literary pursuits. He particularly excels in painting the passion of

love, both in its tenderest emotions and most violent paroxysms; although the characters of his women demonstrate, that he had no very exalted opinion of the virtues of the sex; this feeling may be partly accounted for from his domestic unhappiness, having married twice; he was obliged to divorce both his wives for their licentiousness. Longinus does not rate high his talents for the sublime, but he possessed a superior excellence, his verses with eloquence and harmony breathe an admirable morality. Aristotle comparing him with Sophocles, says, that he was the greatest master of the tender passion. After the unfortunate expedition of Nicias against Syracuse, the Athenian prisoners were set at liberty and freed from slavery, by repeating parts of the tragedies of this poet, and the Sicilians became passionately fond of his writings from that circumstance. On their return home the liberated captives did not fail to return thanks to the poet, as the author of their freedom.

Between the eighteenth and seventy-second year of his age, Euripides composed seventy-five tragedies, of which nineteen are still extant; he is said to have been in the habit of retiring to his birth-place Salamis, and of cultivating his melancholy muse, in a gloomy cavern. In the latter years of his life, exposed to malevolence and envy, his feelings soured by the disreputable conduct of his wives, he retired to the court of Archelaus, king of Macedon, where he was received with every mark of esteem and honour. This monarch to his many royal virtues added a fondness for literature, and knew how to value his society; he particularly admired the virtue, disinterestedness, candour, and gentleness of manners which distinguished Euripides. In this court at that time were many eminent men. Agatho, a tragic poet, a friend of Euripides, Timotheus the famous musician, and Zeuxis the celebrated painter; with such associates Euripides lived happily, and died lamented in the third year of his residence at the court of Macedon, in the

seventy-fifth year of his age. Archelaus mourned for him, as for a near relation, buried him among the kings of Macedonia, and erected a magnificent monument to his memory. It may not be here out of place, to offer a remark on the rapid advance which tragedy made in Greece after its commencement. Thus *Æschylus* its founder, died 456 B. C., and in little more than a century it had advanced to its highest perfection. The Greek drama continued rapidly to improve through each succeeding hand, which may in some measure be accounted for, in this manner, that *Sophocles* and *Euripides* were the friends, the disciples, and often the instructors of the most renowned philosophers, and could draw their knowledge from the valuable stores of *Anaxagoras* and *Socrates*.

MEDEA.

This beautiful tragedy is considered the finest of those still remaining to us from the pen of *Euripides*: it is further remarkable from the circumstance that *Cicero* was engaged in its perusal, when his litter was stopped by the assassins, sent by *Mark Anthony* to murder him. *Medea*, the daughter of *Æetes*, the barbarous and inhospitable king of *Colchis*, becoming enamoured of *Jason*, who went to the court of her father for the purpose of carrying off the celebrated golden fleece, he is enabled by her acquaintance with magic, to get over all his difficulties and dangers, and to bring his expedition to a successful termination; he then marries his guide and preserver, with whom he elopes, and after some years settles at *Corinth*. Here, unmindful of his obligations, *Jason* is desirous of divorcing his wife, the unhappy *Medea*, and of contracting a marriage with *Glauce*, the daughter of king *Creon*, who fearing the cruelty and art of *Medea*, banishes her and her two sons from the country, to secure his daughter from her revenge. This infidelity of *Jason's*, and the dreadful consequences of it, form the subject of this noble tragedy. In the conduct of *Jason*, the poet

has finely united to guilt, its inseparable attendants, folly and punishment ; but in Medea, he has exerted the utmost efforts of his genius ; she, the illustrious princess, the daughter of a king, descended from the sun, and celebrated for her skill in science, finds herself on a sudden forsaken by the man she loved, whom she had saved from destruction, for whom she had betrayed the interests of her country, whose fortunes she had followed, or rather directed for eight years, and whom she had never offended : thus injured by her faithless husband, insulted by Creon, and driven with her sons from his kingdom, she feels her misfortunes in their full force, and meditates a terrible vengeance ; to effect which she accommodates herself to circumstances, pretends to submit to her sentence, is condescending and insinuating to the Corinthian ladies, who form the chorus, submissive to Creon, courteous and suppliant to Ægeus. At her first interview with Jason, she reproaches him with severity, but with a calm dignity sustains her superiority even in her greatest distress, and refuses the offer of his treasures with a generous indignation. Having secured an asylum for herself at Athens, she sends her sons with rich presents to the bride, and by the interposition of Jason succeeds in obtaining her good offices with the king to permit the youths to remain at Corinth, under the protection of their father. Her sons are now sent back to her, and Glauce hastens to array herself in the splendid robes presented by her rival, but soon finds that the enchantress has embued them with a deadly poison, which proves fatal both to herself, and to her father. Jason fearing the fate that may await his sons, hastens to them ; but finds on his arrival that Medea has already sacrificed them, as an expiation of the infidelity of her husband, whose agony she despises, and defying his resentment, flies from Corinth through the air with her slaughtered children, in a chariot drawn by winged dragons. Thus Jason finds himself deprived of his bride, of his sons, and even of the mournful

satisfaction of burying them, and is left to grow old in misery.

Ennius translated the *Medea* into Latin. Ovid wrote a tragedy on the same story, and Mæcenas is said also to have done so—these are lost. Seneca¹ has left us a tragedy on the same subject, which in point of execution is exceedingly inferior to that of the Greek dramatist; with him *Medea* is constantly in a rage; for the workings of a feeling mind, he substitutes turgid declamation: the whole of his fourth act is taken up with horrid incantations, motives are destroyed, and circumstances misrepresented. The beautiful scene in Euripides of the pathetic parting of *Medea* with her children, the struggle between nature and revenge, is extinguished by a burst of frenzy; whilst the cruelty of Creon, and the infidelity of Jason are so mitigated, that the moral of the drama is destroyed. The great Corneille in his *Medée*, with these two different models before him, was so injudicious as to imitate the faults of Seneca, instead of following the chaste simplicity of Euripides.

The scene is in the vestibule of the palace of Jason at Corinth—

The Nurse of Medea.

O, that the gallant Argo had not wing'd
 Her course to Colchis through the clashing rocks
 Of the black Euxine; that in Pelion's groves
 The pine had ne'er been fell'd; nor at the oars
 The hero's hands had labour'd when they sought
 The golden fleece for Pelias: then my queen,
 Medea, had not plough'd the wat'ry way
 To tower'd Iolchos, madd'ning with the love
 Of Jason. * *

¹ Seneca. There were three celebrated authors of this name. The first was a rhetorician; the second a philosopher, and son of the former; the third a tragedian, the author of the drama here alluded to.

This is the state of firmest happiness,
 When from the husband no discordant will
 The wife estranges; but their dearest ties
 Of love are loosen'd; all is variance now
 And hate; for Jason, to his children false,
 False to my mistress, for a royal bride
 Hath left her couch, and wedded Creon's daughter,
 Lord of this land. Ill doth Medea brook
 This base dishonour; on his oaths she calls,
 Recalls their plighted hands, the firmest pledge
 Of mutual faith, and calls the gods to witness
 What a requital she from Jason finds.
 Of food regardless, and in sorrow sunk
 She lies, and melts in tears each tedious hour
 Since first she knew her lord had injur'd her;
 Nor lifts her eye, nor lifts her face from earth,
 Deaf to her friends' entreaties as a rock,
 Or billow of the sea; save when she turns
 Her snowy neck, and to herself bewails
 Her father, and her country, and her house,
 Which she betray'd to follow this base man,
 Who treats her now with such indignity.
 Affliction now hath taught her what it is
 Not to forsake a parent and his house.
 She hates her children, nor with pleasure sees them.
 I fear her, lest she form some strange design;
 For violent her temper, and of wrongs
 Impatient.

* * *

MEDEA, CHORUS.

Medea.

Great Jove, thou righteous vengeance of great Jove,
 And thou bright orb of day! Now shall I find,
 My friends, a glorious conquest o'er my foes.
 This leads to conquest, and my hopes rise high
 That chastisement awaits them: for this man,¹

¹ *Ægeus*, who had vowed to grant her protection at Athens.

Where most the danger threaten'd, shows the port
 Of all my counsels; here then will I fix
 My anchor'd bark, and to the royal town
 Of Pallas bend my steps. * *

JASON, MEDEA, CHORUS.

Jason.

I come at thy request; for though thy thoughts
 Breathe anger, I would not be wanting to thee,
 But hear whate'er of new be now thy wish.

Medea.

What hath been said amiss, I much entreat thee;
 Forgive me, Jason: right it is that thou
 Bear with my passion for the many acts
 Of our past love: calm reason hath resum'd
 Its station in my heart, much have I blam'd
 And chid myself; 'Why, wayward as thou art,'
 Thus have I school'd me? 'Why wilt thou give way
 To madness? Why this anger? All their thoughts
 Are good to me and friendly: I have made
 The monarch of this land mine enemy;
 My husband too, who works my greatest good,
 Wedding the royal dame, that to my sons
 He may raise brothers. Check thy passion then:
 The gods thus kind, hast thou a cause of grief?
 Hast thou not sons? I know that we have fled
 Our country, and are destitute of friends.'

* *

Jason.

This I approve, nor blame thee for the past.
 No wonder that a woman brooks it ill,
 For other nuptials, when by interest led,
 Her husband barter her. But now thy heart
 Is calm'd to better counsels: time hath led
 Reason in triumph to her seat: this shows thee

A woman truly wise. For you, my sons,
 Your father not improvident, hath form'd
 The best of measures, with the fav'ring gods.
 The state of Corinth shall, I trust, behold
 You, with your future brothers, eminent
 In rank and glory; fair advance your growth:
 The rest your father, with whatever god
 Is kind and friendly to us, will effect.
 O may I see you blooming in the prime
 Of manhood, and to every virtue train'd
 Superior to my foes!—But why is this?
 Why stands the moist tear trembling in thine eye?
 Why is thy pale cheek turn'd aside, as if
 Thou didst receive my words unwillingly?

Medea.

Nothing. I was but thinking of my sons.

Jason.

Be cheer'd: their welfare is my dearest care.

Medea.

I will be cheer'd and trust thee: yet I am
 A woman, and by nature prone to tears.

Jason.

Why with excess of grief mourn o'er thy sons?

Medea.

I am their mother: when thy wish was breath'd
 That they might live, a piteous thought¹ arose,
 If that might be. But why I sent to ask
 Thy presence here in part hath been explain'd,
 The rest I now will tell thee. Since the lords
 Are bent to drive me from this land, for me
 I judge it best, not to dwell here, a check,

¹ A piteous thought. This is very beautiful: Medea had already determined to kill her sons, and Jason's new bride; she is artfully lulling him into a fatal security, which is nearly discovered by a gush of maternal tenderness.

A curb on thee, and on thy royal friends;
For I am thought an enemy to their house:
Well then, far distant from this land I fly;
But that my sons may by thy hand be train'd,
Entreat the king they be not exiled hence.

Jason.

With what success I know not, I will move him.

Medea.

Nay rather move thy bride, that she entreat
Her father not to drive my children hence.

Jason.

Most readily: and, be she not unlike
Her gentle sex, I shall prevail with her.

Medea.

In this I will assist thee; I will send her
Presents, whose beauteous lustre far outshines
Whate'er of radiance human eyes have seen;
A fine wrought robe, a gold-entwined crown
My sons shall bear. Of my attendant train
Go one, and quickly bring these ornaments.

Jason.

Why wilt thou simply rob thyself of these?
Think'st thou the royal house in want of vests,
In want of gold? Nay, keep them, give them not:
If me she deign to value, she will hold
My words of higher worth than richest gifts.

Medea.

Dissuade me not, for presents with the gods
Have power; and no persuasive words can charm
The hearts of men like gold. Fortune is her's,
And makes her absolute; this youthful queen
Here governs all: to win my children's stay
My gold, nay e'en my life would I resign.
Go then, my sons, the royal house is nigh,
Entreat, beseech your father's new-won wife,

My mistress, that you may not from this land
Be forced to fly, present these ornaments,
And, mark me, give them to no hands but her's.

TUTOR, MEDEA, CHORUS.

Tutor.

The sentence, lady, is revers'd, which doom'd
Thy sons to banishment. The royal bride
Receiv'd thy presents with a willing mind ;
Hence to thy sons all here is peace.

Medea.

Alas !

Tutor.

Why thus disturb'd, since fortune to thy wish
Is kind? Why is thy pale cheek turn'd aside,
As thou receiv'dst my words unwillingly ?

Medea.

Alas ! Alas !

Tutor.

This to the tidings brought

Is ill attuned.

Medea.

Yet heaves a deeper sigh.

Tutor.

Have I unwittingly come fraught with ill ?
I hop'd to have told what would give thee joy.

Medea.

What thou hast told, thou hast told ; I blame not thee.

Tutor.

Why downward bends thine eye? Why starts that tear?

Medea.

There is a strong necessity, old man ;
The gods, and my ill counsels call for this.

MEDEA, MESSENGER, CHORUS.

Medea.

With eager expectation I await
Th' event, my friends, from thence. But I behold

One of the train of Jason; on he comes
With breathless haste; he looks as he would tell
A tale of some misfortune recent there.

Messenger.

O, thou hast done an execrable deed:
Fly then, Medea, fly; instantly mount
The winged galley, or the rapid car.

Medea.

What weighty cause requires this instant flight?

Messenger.

Ev'n now the daughter of the king is dead,
And Creon, by thy potent charms destroy'd.

Medea.

These are most glorious tidings; I will hold thee
Hereafter 'mongst my best and kindest friends.

Messenger.

What say'st thou? Has thy mind its perfect sense,
Or is this madness? on the royal house
By thee destruction falls: canst thou with joy
Welcome the tidings, unimpress'd with fear?

Medea.


I could say much to this; but let it pass.

HIPPOLYTUS.

Hippolytus, the son of Theseus, devoting himself to the service of Diana, carries the virtue of chastity to such an extent as not only to become averse to the female sex, but also to neglect Venus, and treat her worship with disrespect. This imprudence draws upon him the indignation of that goddess, which cannot be appeased but by his ruin; for this purpose she inspires Phædra, the wife of his father, with an unfortunate passion for her step-son, which she, conscious of its impropriety, feelingly alive to a sense of honour, and careful of her fame, struggles against, and finding herself unable to subdue it, she determines to die. The

poet intended this tragedy as an admonition to his countrymen not to neglect any religious worship, but to pay veneration to all the gods. The young prince Hippolytus, educated by the philosophic Pittheus, excelled in every manly exercise and was (with the above exception) adorned with every virtue; as yet Phædra is unhappy, but cannot be considered guilty. At length however her nurse, a character highly respected by the ancients, extorts the secret from her mistress, and contrary to her positive command, under the sanction of an oath of secrecy, reveals it to the youth, who expresses his abhorrence of the declaration with no small degree of asperity. The betrayed and despised Phædra resolves on immediate self-destruction, and instigated by resentment at Hippolytus for his disdain, she dies with a letter in her hand accusing the youth of the very crime which his virtue had rejected with horror. This accusation is readily believed by the infatuated father, who, having pronounced a sentence of banishment against his son, entreats Neptune to punish him severely for his supposed guilt; Hippolytus to avoid the further resentment of his father, pursues his journey by the sea-shore; where his horses are so much terrified at the appearance of a bull sent by Neptune, that they run among the rocks, till the chariot in which the young prince is riding is broken to pieces, and he is mortally wounded. Theseus considers this interposition as an additional proof of the truth of the accusation, when the testimony of the goddess Diana herself fully exculpates his son, by revealing the displeasure of Venus, and the false accusation of Phædra. Hippolytus is now conveyed into the presence of his repentant father; and after a scene of mutual tenderness and regret, he expires.

The unhappy Phædra, a character exhibited by Euripides with so much propriety, that we are equally surprised and gratified to find such refined delicacy among the ancient Greek authors, has in the hands of a later writer, Seneca,



lost all its finest touches; Euripides represents her as compelled to love by the impulse of Venus, yet sensible to honour, shame, and virtue; and having dropped an expression which she thought disclosed too much, so ashamed, that she commanded her face to be veiled to hide her blushes, and dies to avoid the shame of discovery; but represented by Seneca as a shameless and abandoned woman, deaf to the remonstrances of her nurse, and determined to indulge her passion, regardless of consequences; nay so far forgetting herself as to reveal her love to Hippolytus, and to urge her plea with all the vehemence of ungoverned feeling. Racine has injudiciously imitated this writer, in preference to Euripides; it could lose however but little of its beauty in his hands; indeed this excellent writer was sensible of the impropriety in the character of Phædra by Seneca, and in his own tragedy has been studious to preserve delicacy and decorum. By representing Hippolytus in love he has totally changed the character, and with it the plan and conduct of the Greek drama; though the amiable and gallant Hippolyte of Racine, forms a pleasing and interesting character, he is not the unyieldingly virtuous Hippolytus of Euripides. Our countryman, Mr. Smith, in this drama closely imitated Racine.

The scene is at Trœzene, in the vestibule of the palace of Pitheus.

HIPPOLYTUS, ATTENDANTS.

Hippolytus.

Hail, Diana, Virgin bright,
 Fairest of the forms divine,
 That in heaven's ethereal height
 Graced with beauty's radiance shine!

Thee, goddess, to adorn, I bring this crown
 Inwoven with the various flowers that deck
 The unshorn mead! where never shepherd dar'd
 To feed his flock, and the scythe never came;

But o'er its vernal sweets unshorn the bee
 Ranges at will, and modest nature rolls
 The irriguous streamlet ; garish art thou there
 No share ; of these the modest still may cull
 At pleasure, interdicted to th' impure :
 But for thy golden tresses, honour'd queen,
 Receive this garland from my pious hands.

To me alone of mortals is this grace
 Vouchsaf'd, to share thy company, to hold
 Free converse with thee, and to hear thy voice,
 Though not permitted to behold thy face.
 But let my life, as I began it, end.

Chorus.

STROPHE I.

There is a rock, from whose deep base
 The bubbling fountains flow ;
 And from the top we sink the vase
 To reach the stream below.
 I have a friend, who thither brought
 Her vests with radiant purple¹ wrought,
 To bathe them in the crystal dews,
 Then on the rock's steep ridge display
 To the warm sun's etherial ray
 Their richly-tinctured hues.

ANTISTROPHE I.

There first from her the tidings came,
 That languishing away
 On her sick couch the royal dame
 In her apartments lay ;
 And, every eye avoiding, spread
 The light veil o'er her golden head.

¹ This is a picture of ancient manners, such as Homer exhibits in Nausica ; the mention of the purple robes, denotes the dame to be of the royal house, which gives authenticity to the relation.

Three days from food, through pining grief,
 Have her ambrosial lips refrain'd ;
 And with some secret anguish pain'd,
 From death she hopes relief.

EPODE.

But see the aged nurse before the doors
 Supports her from the house : a gloomy cloud
 Hangs thick'ning on her brow ; what this may be
 I wish to know ; and why, unhappy queen,
 The transient bloom is faded from her cheek.

PHÆDRA, NURSE, CHORUS.

Phædra (to the Chorus).

Troezenian dames, who this remotest verge
 Of Pelops' realms inhabit, through the long
 And silent night oft have my thoughts revolv'd
 The sad depravity of human life ;
 How prone to ill, through no defect, I think,
 Of nature : she to many gives the sense
 Of what is right ; but my reflections lead me
 To this conclusion ; what is good we know
 And feel, but do it not : through listlessness
 Some want the spirit to act ; and some prefer
 The fav'rite pleasure to the work of virtue ;
 For life hath various pleasures : ill-spent hours
 Of frivolous conversation, indolence,
 A pleasing ill, and shame ; but there are two
 Of these, the one not ill, the other sinks
 The house in misery : were the use of each
 Clearly distinguish'd, they no more would be
 Two, with the self-same letters each inscrib'd.
 When thus with serious thought I had revolv'd,
 I deem'd that no allurements had the pow'r
 To cheat my sense, and bend it to forsake
 Its honest purpose : but I will unfold
 The workings of my mind. Soon as I felt

The wound of love, my thoughts were turn'd how best
 To bear it: hence in silence I conceal'd
 My pain; for faithless is the tongue; it knows
 T' enforce the passions when discover'd, oft
 Working the greatest ills. My next resolve
 Was well to bear the madness, and o'ercome it
 With chaste austerity. When those avail'd not
 To vanquish love, I deem'd it noblest for me
 To die: these resolutions none will blame,
 For be this mine: if virtuous be my deeds,
 Let them not be obscure; nor, be they base,
 Let me have many to attest my shame.

Nurse.

A sudden terror, lady, seiz'd my heart
 When first I heard thy griefs; I now perceive
 My weakness; it is ever thus: the thoughts
 Draw wisdom from reflection. Nothing strange
 Affects thee, nothing singular: severe
 The anger of the goddess rushes on thee.
 Lovest thou? what wonder! many feel the force
 Of love: wilt thou for this refuse to live?
 Ill would it fare with those that love, and those
 That shall hereafter love, if they must die;
 For Venus is resistless when she comes
 In all her force; but gentle to the heart,
 That to her influence yields: the proud, that bids
 Scornful defiance to her pow'r, she seizes,
 And, as too well thou know'st, chastises him.

Phædra.

This is what ruins many a noble house,
 And many a peopled town, this glozing speech.
 Behoves us now no blandishment that charms
 The ear, but what excites to virtuous deed.

Nurse.

Wherefore this lofty strain? Thou hast no need
 Of fine form'd words. * *

Phædra.

Fie on thy tongue ! wilt thou not close thy lips ?
Wilt thou not cease to urge thy shameful plea ?

PHÆDRA, HIPPOLYTUS, NURSE, CHORUS.

Hippolytus.

O parent earth, and thou all-seeing sun,
What words of horrid import have I heard !

Nurse.

Ah, speak no more, lest some one mark thy words.

Hippolytus.

Not speak, mine ears thus wounded with thy baseness !

Nurse.

Nay, I conjure thee by this beauteous hand.

Hippolytus.

Away, keep off thy hands, touch not my robes.

Nurse.

Thus at thy knees I beg, undo me not.

Hippolytus.

Why, since thou say'st thou hast spoke nothing ill ?

Nurse.

Affairs like this may not be told to all.

Hippolytus.

Things honest may with honour be made known.

Nurse.

Ah, do not rashly violate thine oath.

Hippolytus.

My tongue indeed hath sworn, but not my mind.

Nurse.

What wilt thou do ? In ruin sink thy friends ?

Hippolytus.

I scorn you, nor hold friendship with the base.

Phædra, to her Nurse.

Vile wretch, thou base corrupter of thy friends,

What mischief hast thou wrought me? May great Jove,
 The author of my race, with lightning blast thee,
 And sweep thee from the earth! Did I not charge thee
 (For I perceiv'd thy purpose) to be silent
 Of what afflicts me now? But thou thy tongue
 Couldst not restrain; I therefore shall not die
 With glory: new resolves must now be form'd;
 For he, inflamed with rage, will to his father
 Disclose my fault, to aged Pittheus tell
 My miseries, and all the country round
 Spread the reproachful story. Perish thou,
 And all like thee, that by inglorious means
 Are prompt to aid their friends against their will!

The queen strangles herself, and dies with a letter in her hand falsely accusing Hippolytus; and Theseus, in defiance of the protestations of his son, believes him guilty; banishes him, and calls on Neptune, agreeably to a former promise, to grant three of his requests, to destroy his son; the god of the sea does so, by frightening the horses of Hippolytus, and a messenger arrives with the gloomy intelligence.

THESEUS, MESSENGER, CHORUS.

Messenger.

Theseus, I bring thee tidings that must claim
 Sorrow from thee, and from thy citizens,
 Be they of Athen's, or Trœzene's state.

Theseus.

What may this be? hath aught of sudden ill,
 Alarming to these neighb'ring towns, befallen?

Messenger.

Hippolytus is dead, to speak in brief,
 Or draws his last short breath of vital air.

Theseus.

Whence this? The vengeance of some injur'd husband,
 Whose wife he, as his father's, stain'd by force?

Messenger.

By his own car destroy'd, and thy request
Thy imprecations to thy father made,
The monarch of the main, against thy son.

Theseus.

O gods! Now, Neptune, thou art prov'd indeed
My father, rightly hast thou heard my prayers.

* *

DIANA, (*enters.*)

Diana.

Son of the noble Ægeus, I command thee
Hear me; the virgin daughter of Latona,
Diana, speaks to thee. Why, Theseus, why,
Unhappy hast thou joy in these events?
Thy son not justly hast thou slain, deceiv'd
By thy wife's falsehood; dark the charge, but clear
Thy fatal loss: deep in the shades below
Wilt thou not hide, with shame depress'd thy head;
Or take thee wings, and mount into the air
From this disastrous ruin? * *

Hippolytus is led in.

O miserable me, how torn, how gash'd!
The effect of that injurious doom pronounc'd
By my injurious father. * *

Diana.

Unhappy youth, in what calamity
Involv'd! Thy generous mind hath ruin'd thee.

Hippolytus.

Odours divine breathe round me: in my ills
My sense is full of thee; it gives my pains
Some respite. Is Diana in the house?

Diana.

Near thee, poor youth, thy honour'd goddess stands.

Hippolytus.

Seest thou, O queen, what miseries are mine?

Diana.

I see; but from my eyes no tear must flow.

Theseus.

It sinks me: life, my son, is irksome to me.

Hippolytus.

More than myself thy error I deplore.

Theseus.

Would I might die instead of thee, my son.

Hippolytus.

How fatal are thy father Neptune's gifts!

Theseus.

O that the wish had never pass'd my lips!

Diana.

Forbear: this violent and cruel rage
Of Venus, which hath crush'd thee for thy chaste
And honest resolution, shall not sink
In dark oblivion unreveng'd; it shall not:
For of her minions, one,¹ whom her heart holds
The dearest of mankind, shall feel the vengeance,
Th' inevitable vengeance of this bow.
To thee, unhappy sufferer, for these ills
High honours in Træzene will I give.²
To thee the virgins, ere their nuptial hour,
Shall, for a length of ages, from their heads
Sever their tresses, and with tears bewail
Thy fate; to thee the melancholy song
Their modest train shall raise; nor shall the love
Of Phædra sink unmention'd and forgotten.
Son of the aged Ægeus, in thine arms
Take thou thy son, embrace him; for thy error
Hath slain him, not thy will; and mortal man
Must err when so the gods appoint. And thou,

¹ One; this is understood of Adonis.

² This is in conformity to history.—Pausan. Corinth.

Hippolytus, forbear to hate thy father ;
 For thus to perish was thy fate. But now
 Farewell ! to see the dying or the dead
 Is not permitted me, it would pollute
 Mine eyes ; and thou art near this fatal ill.

Theseus.

Alas, my son, how wretched dost thou make me !

Hippolytus.

I die : the gates of Pluto open to me.

Theseus.

And leaving me inexpiably guilty.

Hippolytus.

Not so, since I acquit thee of my death.

Theseus.

What ! dost thou free me from the charge of blood ?

Hippolytus.

Be witness, goddess of th' unerring bow.

Theseus.

O my lov'd son, how generous to thy father !

Hippolytus.

Thou too farewell, my father ; be thou happy.

The other tragedies of Euripides still extant are—The Bacchanalians—Ion—Alcestis—The Phœnician Damsels—The Supplicants—Hercules Distracted—The Heraclidæ, or Children of Hercules—Iphigenia in Aulis—Rhesus—The Trojan Captives—Hecuba—Helen—Electra—Orestes—Iphigenia in Tauris—Andromache—and the Cyclops.

The Bacchanalians.—This tragedy is different from the others remaining to us of the Greek theatre ; it is valuable for the best account now existing of the orgies of Bacchus, those rites, even to the dress and manners being particularly described. The first choral ode is precious as a relick, and is all that remains to us of those songs in honour of Bac-

thus, from whence tragedy derives its origin and name. Some of the best critics have ranked this drama among the finest of Euripides, and as respects its composition it is so; nevertheless it is not interesting to us, as we are unable to assume the sentiments of a Greek audience, and feel affected by a story of their Bacchus and his frantic worshippers. This poet concludes five of his tragedies in almost precisely the same words:—

“ With various hands the gods dispense our fates;
Now show’ring blessings which our hopes
Dared not aspire to; now controlling ills
We deem’d inevitable: thus the god
To thee hath giv’n an end exceeding thought;
Such is the fortune of this awful day.”

It creates surprise that Euripides, fertile as his genius was, should have resorted to this sameness, it probably arose from his anxious desire to inculcate reverence for the gods. The above lines do not appear applicable to this tragedy, the proper moral having been previously expressed by Cadmus on the death of Pentheus, as follows:—

“ If there be
A man whose impious pride contemns the gods,
Let him behold his death, and own their power.”


Ion.—The Athenians not satisfied with claiming an origin from the earth of their country, went further, and derived their heroes and kings from some god; being remarkably proud of high traced ancestry, such a descent was esteemed the greatest honour. The subject of this piece is furnished by Ion, the son of Apollo, by Creusa, daughter of king Erechtheus; he is exposed when an infant, found by Mercury, and carried to the temple of Delphi, educated there till manhood, employed in the service of the god, and kept apart from the business of the world. His religious education had impressed his mind with a deep sense of virtue,

and although superior to the allurements of power and wealth, so soon as his father commanded him to leave his agreeable office in the temple and assume his rank, he obeyed. Creusa his mother, having no other child, and in the belief that her husband Xuthus had been unfaithful to her, and with premeditated fraud was bringing a spurious son to her house and throne, commissions an old slave to poison Ion; the attempt fails, and is found out, the mother is condemned to death, and the son's desire to carry the sentence into execution, each unacquainted with their mutual relationship, gives rise to a train of incidents leading to a discovery, which after much tenderness and propriety closes the drama happily.

Alcestis.—The subject of this tragedy is formed on the following unpromising fable. Admetus, king of Pheræ in Thessaly, on his first accession to royal power, had kindly received Apollo, who was banished from heaven, and compelled to serve a mortal for the space of a year; the god after he was restored to celestial honours did not forget that friendly house, but when Admetus lay ill of a disease, from which there was no recovery, prevailed on the fates to spare his life, on condition that some near relation would consent to die for him; neither his father, mother, nor any of his friends however, were willing to pay such a ransom. His wife Alcestis on hearing this, generously devoted her own life to save her husband's; and whilst the whole family are plunged in grief for her loss, and occupied in celebrating her funeral obsequies, Hercules arrives at Pheræ, on his expedition to Thrace, and is hospitably entertained by Admetus, who conceals the cause of his deep melancholy; till at length the hero, being informed of the distress of his generous host, watches Orcus, attacks him while drinking the oblations at the tomb, and about to convey Alcestis to the infernal regions, and having overcome him, recovers the lady whom he restores to her husband. The design of this

drama is to recommend the virtue of hospitality, so sacred among the Greeks; with a beautiful simplicity and tenderness, the scenes of domestic sensibility and distress are exhibited in their full effect.

The Phœnissæ, or Phœnician Virgins.—This tragedy is taken from “The Seven Chiefs against Thebes” by Æschylus, the scenes of fiery daring of his heroes, and those of natural timidity, distress, and horror, of the female character, which the insolence of conquest might spread through a vanquished and plundered city, were painted in the warmest colours and strongest style of that sublime writer; this no succeeding poet could hope to exceed, or scarcely to equal. Euripides has therefore taken for his chorus some virgins brought from Phœnicia, the spoils of war, and devoted to the service of Apollo at Delphi, but detained at Thebes by the invasion of the Argive army, and from them the tragedy takes its title. As the persons of these virgins were sacred, their apprehensions were not so great, and as they were strangers at Thebes, they could not be so deeply interested as the natives, whose lives and fortunes, with all they held most dear, were in great and immediate danger; although the subject is the same, the drama necessarily wants much of that distress and terror which agitates the Theban virgins throughout the tragedy of Æschylus; the view of arms and war is softened by Euripides with the sisterly affection of Antigone, at the sight of her brother Polynices, when she beholds him in the invading army; this beauty is peculiarly his own; he also enlarges on the simple plan of the former poet, by adding to the persons of the drama Jocasta, Polynices, Creon, Tiresias, Menœceus, Œdipus, and supports his characters with propriety, enriching his play by incidents chosen with much judgment; indeed he never fails to raise those emotions of sympathetic sorrow, of which he himself was so sensible, that it has been said no man ever succeeded so well



in raising pity. Seneca also wrote a tragedy on this subject, principally distinguished, in the mutilated remains which have come down to us, by extravagance and bad taste.

The Supplicants.—These are the mothers of the Argive Chiefs, who fell in the cause of Polynices before the gates of Thebes. Creon who succeeded to the throne on the death of the brothers, exceeded the cruel injunctions of Eteocles, and refused the rites of burial, not only to Polynices, but to all the leaders who perished in that attack, commanding that their bodies should lie unhonoured, and exposed to ravenous birds and beasts of prey. Adrastus, king of Argos, being unable to prevail on Creon to restore the bodies of his friends, and not in a condition to appeal to arms, goes to Eleusis, and implores the protection of Theseus, king of Athens; the mothers of the dead chiefs attend him, and form the chorus; they entreat that benevolent sovereign to engage in their cause. Theseus at the intercession of his mother Æthra, consents to an armed interference in their behalf; having defeated the Theban forces in a general engagement, he restores the remains of the fallen leaders to the kind offices of their friends; and the goddess Minerva recommends that the generous assistance of the monarch should be recompensed by an oath from the Argives of close and perpetual alliance with the Athenians. This drama was no doubt written by the poet in honour of his countrymen, and to gratify their feelings; it was glorious in that people to have engaged in this common cause of humanity; the intervention of Minerva was always highly agreeable, and has here a peculiar propriety.

Hercules Distracted.—Among the fabulous labours of this hero, his descent to the infernal regions, to drag the triple-headed dog Cerberus to light, is one of the most extravagant, if taken in the literal sense; but the poet clearly explains its meaning, that such descent was his having

gone to be initiated into the Eleusinian mysteries, and his bringing up Cerberus, that the terrors of those regions were imaginary and false. During his absence however, Lycus, king of Thebes, seizes on his three sons, together with their mother Megara, and grandfather Amphitryon, in order to allay his fears of their popularity and influence by their immediate death; but his wicked intentions are arrested by the timely return of Hercules, who avenges the injury offered to his family on the tyrant, whom he kills. At the instigation of Juno, Iris and Lyssa afflict Hercules with frenzy, under the influence of which he destroys his wife and sons, mistaking them for the relations of Eurystheus. On his recovery he is struck with horror and grief at his involuntary crime, and is with difficulty prevailed on by his friend Theseus to accompany him to Athens, after committing to his father Amphitryon the care of the funerals. This tragedy will not be considered an agreeable one by the generality of readers, on account of the fearful effects of the madness of Hercules, yet the various turns of fortune are well managed, the scenes of distress highly wrought, and the passions of pity, terror, and grief strongly touched. Seneca has a tragedy on this subject, apparently for the purpose of showing how ill he could write on those dramas that had been finely treated by Euripides.

The Heracida, or Children of Hercules.—After the death of that hero, Eurystheus, king of Mycenæ, his bitter enemy, continues to persecute his family, driving them from every country where they seek refuge by the terror of his arms. Under the protection of Iolaus, the fugitives at length reach the Athenian territories, and seek an asylum at the altar before the temple of Jupiter, at Marathon. Eurystheus, when informed of this, sends an ambassador to demand them, but Demophoon, the son of Theseus and king of Athens, refuses to deliver them up, till on consulting the oracle he is told that the defeat of the Athenians can only be averted

by the sacrifice of a noble virgin on the altar of Ceres. Averse to comply with this sad requisition, he is about to yield to superior force, when Macaria, the daughter of Hercules, voluntarily offers herself up as a victim for the preservation of her family. A sanguinary battle now ensues, in which the Argive army is completely routed, and Eurystheus being taken prisoner is immediately put to death by the orders of Alcmena, the mother of Hercules. This tragedy has the same tendency as the Suppliants—to show the ingratitude of the Lacedæmonians, who boasted of their descent from the Heraclidæ, and to animate the Athenians with oracular presages of victory. The glow of heroic virtue animates this drama, and in Macaria shines with the brightest lustre. The character of Iolaus is scarcely less generous; it is recorded of him that just before the battle he poured out this prayer to the gods, “Give me back the strength of my youth for this one day, then let me die;” so much dearer was the protection of the children of Hercules to him than his own life. Euripides has judiciously omitted the latter part of the prayer, because the joy for a glorious victory was not to be clouded by the death of this illustrious and venerable hero.

Iphigenia in Aulis.—The Grecian fleet assembled at the port of Aulis, had been long detained there by contrary winds, and the oracle when consulted declared that a favourable voyage to Troy, could only be procured by the sacrifice of Iphigenia, the daughter of Agamemnon, on the altar of Diana. The unfortunate parent is at length prevailed on to send for the princess, under pretence of giving her in marriage to Achilles; paternal tenderness however, prevails over all other considerations—he secretly forms measures to prevent her coming, is detected, and disappointed. Iphigenia arrives, attended by her mother, Clytemnestra, and is soon informed of her impending fate, against which she at first remonstrates with her father;

but finding that the fate of Greece depended upon her acquiescence, she consents to the expiation demanded, but at the moment of sacrifice, the maiden is suddenly conveyed away by the goddess Diana, and a hind¹ is found in her stead. In this drama Euripides has been perfectly successful in painting scenes of deep distress, and equally powerful in exciting the softest emotions of pity. Aristotle in criticising this tragedy, considers Iphigenia an instance of the inconsistent character; there being no probable conformity between her fears and supplications at first, and her firmness and resolution afterwards: to this it has been replied, that Iphigenia is drawn indeed in the first instance as fearful and suppliant, and properly so with an acute observance of nature; the information of her destination to the altar as a victim was sudden, and without preparation, when her thoughts were employed on her anticipated nuptials; but when made aware of the importance of the cause in which she was to die, it is not unreasonable that she should afterwards be ready to devote herself as a sacrifice. The Iphigenia of Racine is modelled not on that of Euripides, but on the comment of Aristotle, and is not considered to be improved by it.

Rhesus.—The subject of this tragedy is taken from the tenth book of the Iliad, in which Diomed and Ulysses undertake in the night to explore the Trojan camp; they meet Dolon, who was sent by Hector on the like adventure to find out the designs of the Grecians; from him they receive information that Rhesus has just arrived to the aid of Troy, and encamped separately. After killing their informant, they penetrate to the tent of the Thracian monarch, whom they put to death, and carry off his celebrated horses. The story of this drama is simple, it is a good exhibition of barbaric manners.

¹ Hind; in some statements a beautiful goat is mentioned.

The Trojan Captives.—Troy having been captured by the Greeks, this drama commences with a conference between Minerva and Neptune, who agree to punish the sacrilegious offence of Ajax Oileus on the Greek navy, for suffering the criminal to escape with impunity. In the meanwhile Hecuba, who is stretched on the ground before the tent of Agamemnon, is roused by the entrance of the Grecian herald, who informs the unhappy queen, that she must shortly sail in the train of Ulysses to whose lot she had fallen. Cassandra is secretly married to Agamemnon; Polyxena is sacrificed on the tomb of Achilles; Andromache is not only adjudged to be the prize of Neoptolemus, but is forcibly separated from her infant son, whom the Greeks at the instigation of Ulysses put to death, by inhumanly casting him down from the turrets of Pergamus; the body is afterwards committed to the care of Hecuba, who is permitted by the conquerors to bestow on him the rites of sepulture. Flames are then applied to that part of the city which had escaped the previous conflagration, and the Greeks hasten their departure. This tragedy is a sad, and talented combination of woe, pity, and terror.

Hecuba.—During the period that the Grecian fleet is detained on the coast of Thrace, on its return from the siege of Troy, the ghost of Achilles appears in the middle of the night, and demands the sacrifice of Polyxena, the daughter of Priam, who is accordingly put to death. A little afterwards a dead body is cast on the shore, and Hecuba recognizes it to be that of her son Polydorus, whom king Polymestor his guardian had murdered, in order to obtain possession of those treasures with which the young prince had been amply supplied by his father. In the prosecution of her revenge Hecuba secures the interest of Agamemnon, and sends for the perfidious monarch, who arrives with his two sons; she and her companions then delude him with a pretended discovery of secreted wealth, and

seizing a favourable opportunity, they deprive Polymestor of his eye-sight, and kill his two sons. This outrage is the cause of a formal complaint to Agamemnon, who exculpates Hecuba. The sensibility and generous spirit of the devoted Polyxena create admiration of her virtues, with pity for her unhappy fate; the villainy of Polymestor excites disgust, and the revenge of Hecuba gives rise to feelings of terror.

Helen.—The celebrated Helen, whose fatal beauty and misconduct occasioned the destruction of Troy, and a long series of calamities to Greece, is here, by a fiction of the poet, represented as an innocent and injured woman, a faithful and generous wife. To accomplish his object, Euripides represents Paris as deceived by a phantom, while the true Helen was placed under the protection of Proteus, king of Egypt, during the siege of Troy, and in time Menelaus finds, and is reconciled to his wife. Ancient poetry appears to have delighted in such aerial images, and the poet has employed his talent to render this drama agreeable.

Electra. — The subject of this piece is the same with that of the *Choephoræ* of Æschylus, but the disposition of it is much altered, as might be expected from the different genius of the poets. Here Orestes, on arriving in disguise at the court of Mycenæ, finds his sister Electra had been forcibly wedded to a peasant, dwelling in a paltry cottage, and compelled to the performance of menial offices. He is recognised by an old tutor, who advises him to slay Ægisthus at a public sacrifice; he does so, and afterwards kills his mother at the instigation of Electra. No sooner, however, has he committed this shocking act, than he is struck with remorse at the guilt which he has contracted, when Castor and Pollux descend from the skies, and recommend him to repair to Athens, seek the protection of Minerva, and take his trial before the court of Areopagus, after bestowing his sister in marriage on his friend

Pylades. The three great poets are considered to have taken the following methods in the discovery of Orestes to his sister. Æschylus has most dignity, in Sophocles it is most affecting, and in Euripides most natural.

Orestes.—To the *Choephoræ* of Æschylus we likewise owe the *Orestes* of Euripides. This drama represents that hero pursued by the enmity of the Furies, as a punishment for the murder of his mother; while the Argives, at the instigation of Tyndarus, the father of Clytemnestra, prefer a charge of parricide against the young prince and his sister. At this juncture Menelaus arrives at Argos with Helen, and is solicited by his nephew to support his cause before the judges; apprehensions of danger, however, prevent his interference, and Orestes with Electra are condemned to death. To punish the apathy of Menelaus, the more cool Pylades proposes to kill Helen, and she is about to fall a sacrifice to their resentment, when she suddenly and miraculously disappears. The two friends then by the aid of Electra obtain possession of Hermione, the daughter of Menelaus, whom they threaten with instant death, but Apollo interposes and rescues the maiden, directing Menelaus to bestow his daughter on Orestes, to whom he prescribes the means necessary for expiating his guilt in the punishment he had inflicted on his mother. This piece is chiefly remarkable for the scene in which the madness of Orestes is exhibited with a hand so masterly and correct, as to be considered a perfect specimen of tragic elevation; and here, as it has been correctly observed, the poet himself saw the Furies.

Iphigenia in Tauris.—In this piece the reader will renew his acquaintance with the amiable but unfortunate Iphigenia; from the altar of Diana at Aulis, she had been removed by that goddess to her temple in the Tauric Chersonese, now called Crim Tartary, where she reluctantly presided as priestess over the cruel rites there established by

Thoas, the king of that country, who was accustomed to sacrifice all strangers on their arrival in his dominions. Orestes and his friend Pylades land on this inhospitable coast, to obtain possession of the statue of Diana, in obedience to the oracle of Apollo; they are seized and carried to the king, who sends them in chains to the priestess, as victims to the goddess; their death, which appears inevitable, is prevented by the recognition of Orestes and his sister. Iphigenia now conspires with her brother and his friend to escape from this barbarous country, and to convey the divine statue to Athens, which design happily succeeds. The rage of Thoas against the supposed accomplices of their flight, and his eagerness in pursuit, are restrained by the appearance of Minerva, who communicates to him the future destiny of the fugitives. The circumstances of this drama are made to arise naturally from each other, and are conducted with much skill.

Andromache.—After the destruction of Troy, Andromache, the amiable wife of Hector, falls to the lot of Pyrrhus, to whom she bears a son named Mollossus. The unfortunate captive and her child excite the jealousy of Hermione, the barren wife of the conqueror; she, in conjunction with her father Menelaus, determines to take advantage of the absence of Pyrrhus at Delphi, to destroy both mother and child, which cruel design is only prevented by the interference of Peleus. Hermione finding her schemes defeated, resolves to lay violent hands on herself to avoid her husband's resentment, but is dissuaded from doing so. Orestes arrives, with him Hermione consents to elope, and Pyrrhus¹ is soon after murdered by the Delphians, at the instigation of Orestes. The grief of Peleus at the premature death of his grandson, is allayed

¹ Pyrrhus, called also Neoptolemus, or new warrior, because it was in the latter years of the siege of Troy, that he joined the Greek army.

by the appearance of Thetis, who directs him to bestow Andromache in marriage on Helenus, the son of Priam; the crown of Epirus is to be conferred on her son Molossus, from whom a long succession of princes is to descend. This tragedy was probably written to gratify the feelings of the Athenians, by exhibiting the chiefs of Sparta in an unamiable light; the baseness of Menelaus, the cruelty and insolence of Hermione, and the malignantly revengeful spirit of Orestes, are all unfavourable pictures. The modest virtue and conscious dignity of Andromache are here rewarded, while her fame has been rendered immortal in the writings of Homer, Euripides, Virgil, and Racine.

*The Cyclops.*¹—Ulysses on his return from the Trojan war is driven on the eastern coast of Sicily, near Mount Ætna, where he finds Silenus and his sons slaves to Polyphemus, the king of the Cyclops. This monster is a cannibal, and determines to feast on Ulysses and his companions: after devouring several of them, he is made tipsy with some wine which Ulysses had brought in his ship, and falling asleep his eye is put out with a firebrand; Ulysses taking advantage of his blindness escapes, carrying off his companions. This tragedy is valuable as a specimen of the burlesque dramas, or Mimes, the features of which were satire and coarse drollery, in very homely language. The Pantomimes² consisted solely of gesticulation, and were carried to a considerable degree of perfection.

¹ The Cyclops, a race of men of gigantic stature, supposed to be the sons of Cœlus and Terra; they had but one eye in the middle of their forehead, whence their name. From their vicinity to Mount Ætna they were supposed to be the workmen of Vulcan, and to have fabricated the thunderbolts of Jupiter. The most solid walls and strongest fortresses are styled by the ancients Cyclopean, to give an idea of more magnificence.

² Pantomimes—it was among the Romans, however, that they advanced to perfection; they will be again mentioned in the second volume of this work.


CHAPTER VIII.

GREEK COMEDY.

THE ANCIENT, THE MIDDLE, AND THE NEW—COMIC POETS—
EUPOLIS, CRATINAS, ARISTOPHANES, AND MENANDER —
ILLUSTRATIONS.

The precise period when comedy took its rise among the Greeks is not known with certainty; its antiquity is about the same as that of tragedy. The Parian chronicle says, "Since comedies were carried in carts by the Icarians, Susarion being the inventor; and the first prize proposed was a basket of figs and a small vessel of wine." Susarion was a native of Megara, and contemporary with Thespis, about 562 B. C. A comparison cannot fairly be instituted between the state of tragedy and comedy in Greece; the latter never advanced in any high degree towards the perfection to which the former was carried, indeed the state of society hardly permitted its existence; few of the familiar relations which give rise to comic sentiments and situations, were known in those times. The Athenians had strong and lively notions of the ridiculous, and whilst they listened with rapture to the strains of Sophocles and Euripides, they laughed and were amused at the sarcastic drolleries of Aristophanes. The influence of women was not sufficiently ascendant to confer grace and dignity on comedy, and the enlightened sensibility to moral delicacy and beauty was defective.

The Greek comedy is divided into the ancient, the middle, and the new. Eupolis and Cratinas, who flourished about 450 B. C., were writers of the first species; we have no remains of it, although we know that it was a bitter satire, and mimicry of real personages exhibited by name upon the stage, which became so intolerable, that the law



was called in to repress its licentiousness. It gave birth to the middle comedy, which continued the satirical delineation of real characters, but under fictitious names. The last improvement, the new comedy, consisted in banishing all personal satire, and confining it to a delineation of manners. The comedies were performed by public authority three or four times a year; at the feasts of Bacchus called the Dionysia, which were celebrated towards the spring; at the Pánathenea, or feast of Minerva, every fifth year; and at the feasts of the Lenæan Bacchus, annually at the end of autumn. Besides these it is believed there was another festival held particularly in honour of Bacchus, named Anthesteria, and divided into three, called the feasts of the Tuna, the Cups, and the Pots.

Aristophanes flourished 435 B. C.

This poet was born about 460 B. C.; it is doubtful whether the place of his birth were Athens, or Ægina. At his commencement as a comic author, he used much caution in the composition of his plays, with the view of reducing the vague construction of the old comedy, to a more correct and useful form. It is asserted that his piece on the subject of Cocalus, king of Sicily, furnished Menander with the groundwork on which he erected the structure of his dramas. The works of Aristophanes are highly valuable as the only complete specimens of the Greek comedy which exist, and as the standard of Attic writing in its purity. His comedies are of a mixed species, sometimes personal, at others inclining to parody, according to the character of the middle comedy, on some occasions elevated, grave, and highly polished, at others sinking into humble dialogue, coarse indecency, puns, and quibbles. The versatility of his genius is great, for he exhibits to our view every rank and description of his countrymen: that he possessed splendid talents for the stage there can be no doubt, the lightness and grace of his trochaic metres, and the

majestic swell of the anapaestic tetrameter, which has taken its name from him, are fraught with music the most eloquent, even under all the disadvantages of neglected accents, and modern pronunciation. Schlegel observes, "that in many passages of serious and earnest poetry, here and there introduced, Aristophanes shows himself to be a true poet, and capable had he chosen it of reaching the highest eminence, even in the more dignified departments of his art."

In regard to the character and moral bearing of the writings of this poet, much diversity of opinion has been expressed, both in ancient and modern times; some authors have blamed him with unmitigated severity, others have gone nearly as far in his praise, fascinated by the wit of his pieces; it may not therefore be uninteresting to take a brief view of the state of society in Athens when he rose into notice, indeed it is only justice to his memory to do so, in order to arrive at a candid and fair opinion. A fatal compact had been silently, although not the less effectually made, between the Athenian people and Pericles; the former bargaining for amusement, pay, outward splendour, and nominal sovereignty, the latter contenting himself with the possession of unostentatious but real power, and the agreement had been sealed by acts of gross corruption. Retribution, however, almost immediately followed; war without the walls of the city, and the plague within, commenced their deadly work on both parties. The children of Pericles fell victims to the pestilence, the father soon followed them, and the reins of government held by his firm, but not tyrannical hands, (those of a man of rank, of talent, of splendid taste, a scholar, and a gentleman,) were usurped by a series of low, corrupt, and profligate demagogues—Cleon, a tanner, Hyperbolus, Eucrates, the vender of flax and tow, Lysicles, a cattle dealer, &c. : these men disappeared, "another and another succeeded, the last knave as welcome as the first." Cleon and Hyperbolus were followed by

Cleophon, originally a maker of musical instruments, not of true Attic origin, and, as it is stated, unable even to speak the language with correctness; the innate vices of the Athenian constitution had placed this man at the head of public affairs, and for a time the life and fortunes of the citizens depended on his nod, and were equally insecure. What the actual position of the people was under such a domination, is best learned from the pages of Xenophon, and the legal speeches of Isocrates and Lysias: violent party spirit, heart-burnings, and jealousies; the disruption of all family and social ties, treacheries, commotions, exile, assassinations, all the worst features of disorganized society, meet us at every turn, and present a most melancholy picture. If therefore, Aristophanes, as the public censor, an office with which he found himself virtually invested, had confined himself to pointing out the above abuses, and lashing with the keenest edge of his wit the authors of them, he would not only have been blameless but entitled to great praise. It was his wanton and unjust attacks, however, on the characters of the most excellent citizens, Socrates, Euripides, and others, which have left so foul a stain on his memory. It is true that Socrates never went to the theatre, except to see the tragedies of his intimate friend Euripides, whose productions he admired for their morality; he disliked the comic poets, being shocked at the licentiousness of the old comedy; it was only when Critias or Alcibiades compelled him by earnest entreaties that he ever condescended to appear. It was his sentiments of disapproval that gave Aristophanes a disgust to Socrates, and led him to seek opportunities for revenge. There is another charge against this poet, the gross indecency which frequently appears in his works. Taking therefore, a dispassionate view of his character and conduct, exhibited in his writings, allowing him all due praise for wit and ability, the most judicious opinion appears to be, that Aristophanes was a vicious man, of revengeful and malig-

nant feelings, defective in his principles of morality and decency, which in a great measure destroyed the efficacy and usefulness of his talents. It does not appear that Aristophanes performed in his own pieces, if we except the part of Cleon¹ in "The Knights," who was so formidable a person, that no one could be found bold enough to represent him. This poet was author of about fifty-four comedies, of which we have eleven extant, besides some fragments quoted by Athenæus, and other ancient authors. He was not happy in his family, the conduct of his wife was so indifferent that he felt ashamed of her; and his sons Philippus and Ararotes did not conduct themselves with credit. Aristophanes died about 388 B. C., upwards of seventy years of age.

THE CLOUDS.

The piece called "The Clouds," is considered the most ingenious of all the comedies left to us by Aristophanes. In the invention of the subject and distribution of its parts, his comic talent is admirably displayed; but its glory is almost eclipsed by the ridiculous light in which he exhibits the excellent and moral Socrates. It may not be true, nor indeed is it very probable, that it cost that great man his life, as he lived twenty-three years after its first representation; at the same time great and just blame is attachable to Aristophanes on this subject. This play was not favourably received at its first performance, it was twice exhibited in competition for the prize, but without success. The poet declares this to be the most elaborate of his works, and unhesitatingly indulges in unbounded praises of himself, a licence which appears to have belonged to the comedy of his time.

¹ The witty delineation of Cleon in "The Knights," obliged that venal and peculating demagogue to refund five talents of which he had robbed the Islanders, under the pretence of persuading the Athenians to lighten the burdens they had imposed upon them.

The subject.—Strepsiades, a rich old Athenian, has an extravagant wife and son, who threaten to cause his ruin by their conduct in running him into debt; in his difficulties he is represented as having recourse to the advice and lessons of Socrates, through which in a little time he becomes so great a rhetorician as to puzzle his creditors, and drive them from his dwelling. He then sends his son to the philosopher, who not only masters his father in argument, but thrashes him soundly besides; Strepsiades in a fit of repentance and rage, at length sets fire to the residence of Socrates. The scene lies near the house of the philosopher at Athens.

STREPSIADES, PHIDIPIDES HIS SON, AND THE SERVANT OF STREPSIADES.

Strepsiades.

Ah me! ah me! will this night¹ never end?
 Oh kingly Jove, shall there be no more day?
 And yet the cock sung out long time ago;
 I heard him—but my people lie and snore,
 Snore in defiance, for the rascals know
 It is their privilege in time of war,
 Which with its other plagues brings this upon us,
 That we mayn't rouse these vermin with a cudgel.
 Here's my young hopeful too, he sleeps it through
 In his five folds of goat-skin blanket wrapt.
 Would I could sleep so sound! but my poor eyes
 Have no sleep in them; what with debts and duns,
 And stable-keepers' bills, which this fine spark
 Heaps on my back, I lie awake the whilst,
 And what cares he but to coil up his locks,
 Ride, drive his horses, dream of them all night,
 Whilst I, poor mortal, may go hang—for now

¹ This comedy begins between cock-crowing and the first dawn, (*ορθρος βαδύς*); the scene represents the bedchamber of Strepsiades, his servants and son sleeping near.

The moon in her last quarter wanes apace,
 And my usurious creditors are gaping.
 What ho! a light! bring me my tablets, boy!
 That I may set down all, and sum them up,
 Debts, creditors, and interest upon interest.

(Boy enters with a light and tablets.)

Let me see where I am, and what the total—
 Twelve¹ pounds to Pasias—Hah! to Pasias twelve!
 Out on it, and for what? a horse forsooth,
 Right noble² by the mark—Plague on such marks!
 Would I had given this eye from out this head,
 Ere I had paid the purchase of this jennet!

Phidippides (in his sleep.)

Shame on you, Philo!—keep within your ring.

Strepsiades.

There 'tis! that's it, the bane of all my peace!
 He's racing in his sleep.

Phidippides.

A heat—a heat!

How many turns to a heat?

Strepsiades.

More than enough;
 You've given me turns in plenty—I am jaded.
 But to my list—What name stands next to Pasias?
 Amynias,³ three good pounds—still for the race

¹ The Athenian pound was of the value of 100 drachmas, and each drachma 6 oboli; computing the pound about 3 of ours, which is correct, the price of the horse was £36.

² In the original the mark is the koppa, whence these horses were koppatis, as those stamped with the sigma were called samphoræ. The bucephali had the mark of the ox's head, and probably Alexander's charger was of this sort.

³ Amynias was the archon when this comedy was acted, and the poet mentions his name by way of ridicule. At length the persons of the archons were by a special law protected from ridicule and detraction.

A chariot¹ mounted on its wheels complete.

Phidippides.

Dismount, unharness, and away !

Strepsiades.

I thank you ;

You have unharness'd me : I am dismounted,
And with a vengeance—All my goods in pawn,
Fines, forfeitures, and penalties in plenty.

Phidippides. (wakes.)

My father ! why so restless ? what has vex'd you ?

Strepsiades.

The sheriff² vexes me ; he breaks my rest.

Phidippides.

But suffer me at least to sleep awhile.

Strepsiades.

Sleep on,

But take this with you ; all these debts of mine
Will double on your head : a plague confound
That wicked match-maker, who drew me in
To wed forsooth that precious dame of mine ;
I liv'd at ease in the country, coarsely clad,
Rough, free, and full withal as oil and honey,
And store of stock could fill me, till I took,
Clown as I was, this limb of the Alcmaeon's,
This vain, extravagant, high-blooded dame :
Rare mate-fellows and dainty—were we not ?
I, smelling of the vine-vat, figs, and fleeces,
The produce of my farm, all essence she,
Saffron and wanton's kisses, paint and washes
A pamper'd woman—idle I'll not call her ;

¹ The chariot here alluded to was built extremely light, with wheels of a stated construction, for the race. The price annexed to it shows that it was of slight and simple workmanship.

² The Athenian Demarchus, here rendered sheriff, had the custody of all goods pledged to creditors.

She took due pains in faith to work my ruin,
Which made me tell her, pointing to this cloak,
Now thread-bare on my shoulders—see, good wife,
This is your work, in troth you toil too hard.

(*Boy re-enters.*)

Master, the lamp has drunk up all its oil.

Strepsiades.

Aye, 'tis a drunken lamp; the more fault your's;
Whelp, you shall howl for this!

*Strepsiades knocking violently at the door of the house of
Socrates, a Disciple calls out from within.*

Disciple.

Go hang yourself! and give the crows a dinner.
What noisy fellow art thou at the door?

Strepsiades.

Strepsiades of Cicyнна, son of Phidon.

Disciple.

Whoe'er thou art 'fore heaven thou art a fool
Not to respect these doors; battering so loud,
And kicking with such vengeance, you have marr'd,
The ripe conception of my pregnant brain,
And brought on a miscarriage.¹

Strepsiades.

Pardon me,

Afar off in the country I reside—
But say, what subject have I thus disturb'd?

Disciple.

These are things

We never speak of but amongst ourselves.

Strepsiades.

Speak boldly then to me, for I am come
To be amongst you, and partake the secrets
Of your profound academy—

¹ This is a sneer of the poet, as the mother of Socrates was a midwife, and his father a sculptor.

Disciple.

Enough!

I will impart, but set it down in thought
Amongst our mysteries. This is the question,
As it was put but now to Chærephon
By our great master Socrates, to answer—
How many of his own lengths at one spring
A flea can hop—for we did see one vault
From Chærephon's black eye-brow to the head
Of the philosopher.

Strepsiades.

And how did the other
Contrive to measure this?

Disciple.

Most cleverly.

He dipt the insect's feet in melted wax,
Which, hard'ning into sandals as it cool'd,
Gave him the space by rule infallible.

Strepsiades.

Imperial Jove, what subtilty of thought!

The comedy continues with much gross raillery, till Socrates is represented in the air in a basket.

Strepsiades.

But look! who's this suspended in a basket?

Disciple.

'Tis himself.

Strepsiades.

Himself! who?

Disciple.

Socrates.

Strepsiades.

O Socrates!

Go you and call him with a mighty voice.

Disciple.

Call him yourself, for I am not at leisure. (*exit.*)

Strepsiades.

O Socrates—my Socratidion!

Socrates.

Why call'st thou me, ephemeral?

Strepsiades.

I would know what thou art doing.

Socrates.

I tread in air, contemplating the sun.

Strepsiades.

Ah, then I see you're basketed so high,
That you look down upon the gods—Good hope,
You'll lower a peg on earth.

Socrates.

Sublime in air,
Sublime in thought, I carry my mind with me,
Its cogitations all assimilated
To the pure atmosphere in which I float.
Lower me to earth, and my mind's subtle powers,
Seiz'd by contagious dulness, lose their spirit;
For the dry earth drinks up the generous sap,
The vegetating vigour of philosophy,
And leaves it a mere husk.

Strepsiades.

What do you say?
Philosophy has sapt your vigour? Fie upon it;
Come down, come down, dear Socrates, to me—
And teach me those fine things I came in quest of.

Socrates.

And what fine things are they?

Strepsiades.

A new receipt
For sending off my creditors, and foiling them
By the art logical; for you shall know
By debts, pawns, pledges, usuries, executions,
I am rackt and rent in tatters.

Socrates.

Why permit it?
What strange infatuation seiz'd your senses?

Strepsiades.

The horse consumption, a devouring plague.
But so you'll enter me amongst your scholars,
And tutor me to trick my creditors;
Name your own price, and by the gods I swear,
I'll pay you the last drachm.

Socrates.

By what gods?
Answer that first; for your gods are not mine.

Strepsiades.

How swear you then? As the Byzantians swear,
By their base iron coin.

Socrates.

Art thou ambitious
To be instructed in celestial matters,
And taught to know them rightly?

Strepsiades.

If there be such, by Jove.

Socrates.

What if I bring you to a conference
With my own proper goddesses, the Clouds?

Strepsiades.

'Tis what I wish devoutly.

Socrates.

Sit down then on this sacred pallet-bed.

Strepsiades.

Lo, I am seated.

Socrates.

Now take this chaplet—wear it.

Strepsiades.

Why this chaplet?

Would'st make of me another Athamas,
And sacrifice me to a cloud?

Socrates.

Fear nothing,

It is a ceremony indispensable
At all initiations.

Strepsiades.

Then what will 't profit me?

Socrates.

Thou shalt become

Subtle, refin'd, and eloquent of speech ;

Only be still.

Strepsiades.

By Jove, there's no mistake ;

Pounded thus I soon shall turn to flour.

Socrates.

Well-omen'd silence, the old man beseems,

With patient ear to listen to my prayer.

Invocation.

O air, despotic king, whose boundless chain,

Girds the suspended earth, and thou, bright æther,

Ye Clouds too, venerable deities,

Who breed the thunder and the lightnings bolt ;

Appear on high to your philosopher.

Strepsiades.

Not yet, not yet, until I fold myself

Within my cloak, lest I be drenched by rain.

Wretch that I was, to venture out of doors

Without my dogskin cap!

Socrates.

Thrice honour'd Clouds,

Reveal yourselves to him, whether ye sit

Upon Olympus' sacred snow-capp'd head,

Or in your father Ocean's gardens weave

The holy dance among the nymphs, or else

In streams of Nile, your golden goblets dip ;

Or whether on Mæotis' lake ye dwell,

Or Minas' snowy rock, give ear, I beg,

And graciously accept my offerings.¹

¹ Of powdered aromatic leaves, part of which he had cast on Strepsiades.

Chorus of Clouds.

Ascend, we watery clouds, on high,
 Daughters of Ocean, climb the sky,
 And o'er the mountain's pine-capt brow
 Towering our fleecy mantle throw ;
 Thence let us scan the wide-stretch'd scene,
 Groves, lawns, and rilling streams between,
 And stormy Neptune's vast expanse,
 And grasp all nature at a glance.
 Now the dark tempest flits away,
 And lo ! the glittering orb of day
 Darts forth his clear ethereal beam,
 Come let us snatch the joyous gleam.

Socrates.

Yes, ye divinities whom I adore,
 I hail you now propitious to my prayer.
 Did'st thou not hear them speak in thunder¹ to me ?

Strepsiades.

And I too am your Cloudships most obedient
 And under sufferance. * *

Socrates.

Forbear

These gross scurrilities, for low buffoons
 And mountebanks more fitting. Hush ! be still.

Chorus of Clouds.

We clouds, replete with fruitful showers,
 Here let us seek Minerva's towers,
 The cradle of old Cecrops' race,
 The world's chief ornament and grace ;

¹ After Socrates has performed his solemn incantation, the clouds give sign of their approach by thunder, and that ceasing they chant their Lyric ode in the style of Archilochus, as they are descending towards the earth. Aristophanes had the clouds represented by figures which were probably striking. The manner of imitating thunder in the theatre at Athens, was by pouring stones from a vessel or cask, against the sides of a large brass caldron.

Her mystic fanes and rites divine
 And lamps in sacred splendour shine;
 Here the gods dwell in marble domes
 Feasted with costly hecatombs,
 That round their votive statues blaze,
 Whilst crowded temples ring with praise;
 And pompous sacrifices here
 Make holidays throughout the year;
 And when gay spring-time comes again,
 Bromius convokes his sportive train,
 And pipe, and song, and choral dance,
 Hail the soft hours as they advance.

Strepsiades.

By Jupiter, I pray thee, Socrates,
 Tell me who utters this musical sound—
 Some heroines?

Socrates.

Not so,

No dames, but clouds celestial, friendly powers,
 To men of sluggish parts; from these we draw
 Sense, apprehension, volubility,
 Wit to confute, and cunning to ensnare.

Strepsiades.

Aye, therefore 'twas that my heart leapt within me,
 For very sympathy when first I heard them:
 Now I could prattle shrewdly of first causes,
 And spin out metaphysic cobwebs finely,
 And dogmatize most rarely, and dispute
 And paradox it with the best of you.

Socrates.

Be silent, and if aught
 Of doubts disturb thy thoughts, dismiss them straight,
 And having barr'd them from thy mind, again
 Revolve thy meditations.

Strepsiades.

Hah! my precious Socrates.

Socrates.

What would'st thou, old man?

Strepsiades.

I have sprung a thought,

A plot upon my creditors.

Socrates.

What?

Strepsiades.

Answer me this—Suppose that I should hire

A witch, who some fair night should raise a spell,

Whereby I'll snap the moon from out her sphere,

And bag her.

Socrates.

What to do?

Strepsiades.

To hold her fast,

And never let her run her courses more;

So shall I escape my creditors.

Socrates.

How so?

Strepsiades.

Because the calculations of their usury

Are made from month to month.

Socrates.

A gallant scheme;

And yet methinks I could suggest a hint

As practicable, and no less ingenious.

Suppose you are arrested for a debt,

We'll say five talents, how will you contrive

To cancel at a stroke both debt and writ?

Strepsiades.

Patience, I cannot tell you how off hand;

It needs some cogitation.

Socrates.

Were you apt,

Such cogitations would not be to seek;

They would be present at your fingers' ends,

Buzzing alive, like chafers in a string,
Ready to slip and fly.

Strepsiades.

I've hit the nail
That does the deed, and so you will confess.

Socrates.

Out with it then.

Strepsiades.

Good chance but you have noted
A pretty toy, a trinket in the shops,
Which being rightly held produceth fire
From things combustible.

Socrates.

A burning glass
Commonly called—

Strepsiades.

You are right; it is so.

Socrates.

Proceed!

Strepsiades.

Put the case now, your rascal bailiff comes,
Shews me his writ. I, standing thus, mark me,
In the sun's stream, measuring my distance, guide
My focus to a point upon his writ,
And off it goes in smoke.

Socrates.

By the graces!
'Tis wittingly devis'd.

Strepsiades.

The very thought
Of his five talents cancell'd at a stroke,
Makes my heart dance for joy.

Socrates.

But now again—
What next?

Strepsiades.

Socrates.

Suppose yourself at bar, surpriz'd
Into a suit, no witnesses at hand,

The judge prepar'd to pass decree against you.
How will you parry that ?

Strepsiades.

As quick as thought.

Socrates.

But how ?

Strepsiades.

Incontinently hang myself,

And baulk the suitor.

Socrates.

Come, you do but jest.

Strepsiades.

Serious by all the gods ! A man that's dead
Is out of the law's reach.

Socrates.

I've done with you,
Instruction's lost upon you ; your vile jests
Put me beyond all patience.

The author has found it difficult to give an exact idea of this comedy, without occasionally altering the received translations, in keeping more with the original. Another difficulty has arisen from the wit and raillery of the piece, often degenerating into coarseness and gross indelicacy.

THE WASPS.

This comedy is a severe satire upon the passion of the Athenians for courts of justice : an acute observer has correctly observed, that "to enact a law, to plead a cause, to decide a suit, and to execute a magistracy, were four things which constituted the very instinct of an Athenian." Seldom indeed, has a more instructive lesson been offered than in this piece, and in a manner more likely to produce beneficial effects ; but unfortunately it came too late, the passion was so inveterate that it could not be eradicated. This is shown by the example of Philocleon ; the good sense and

honour of his son were not able to extinguish a failing which rendered the father contemptible to persons of integrity, and the sport of a giddy populace. The son, worthy of much praise, endeavours to divert his parent from the love of courts, and to inspire him with a new feeling. The father, however, in entering the new course of life opened to him, carries thither his excesses, and all the follies which had distinguished his former tastes; he even preserves the same tone and expression, and in changing the name still retains enough of its character to make the forensic propensity contemptible and ridiculous. The method chosen by the son to cure his father of the mania, is an inimitable satire against the folly of the magistrates and people, who, neglecting the consequences of a war¹ which threatened the ruin of the state, were solely occupied in courts and judgments. Such a subject as this could only be treated properly by an author possessed of the wit and talent of Aristophanes, and was doubtless highly agreeable to the feeling of Athenians, the most scandalizing people that ever existed, affording them much diversion at the expense of some of their most eminent men. It was upon this piece that Racine founded his amusing comedy of "*Les Plaideurs*," the only one he has written.

The scene lies at Athens, in the house of Philocleon.

PHILOCLEON, (*the Father*), BDELYCLEON, (*the Son*),
CHORUS, (*Old Men habited as Wasps*.)

Philocleon.

And straight from the beginning will I show
That our dominion is surpass'd by none.
For what in life's more happy than a judge,
What more luxurious or more terrible
When he is old? whom, as he creeps from bed,

¹ This comedy was acted in the ninth year of the Peloponnesian war, under the Archon Amynias, at the Lenæan feasts.

Huge men, four cubits high,¹ guard at the bar,
 And then as I approach, some one extends
 His supple hand, with public rapine fill'd.
 Then pouring forth a miserable voice,
 They bend in supplication, "Pity me,
 O father, I beseech thee, if thou e'er
 Hast in thy magistracy pillag'd aught,
 Or in the army, bartering with thy messmates!
 Who had not known that I were in existence
 But for his late acquittal.

Bdelycleon.

Let this saying

Touching the clients be my memorandum.

Philocleon.

Then entering, by solicitation press'd,
 And anger wip'd away, of all I promis'd,
 Arriv'd within, no part will I perform,
 But listen to the supplicating voice
 Utter'd by those who would elude conviction.
 For then what flattery may a judge not hear?
 Some weep their poverty, and loads of woe,
 Until they equal mine—some tell us fables,
 And others one of *Æsop's* drolleries.
 Some jest, that I may be provok'd to laugh,
 And lay aside my wrath—and if by these
 We fail to be persuaded, straight they drag
 The children, male and female, by the hand:
 I listen—they stoop down and bleat together,
 And then on their behalf the trembling sire
 Beseeches me, as if I were a god,
 To free him from th' impeachment, "If thou'rt pleas'd
 With a lamb's voice, pity a child's complaint."
 And if in little pigs I take delight,
 Then should I listen to his daughter's voice,

¹ Four cubits, or six feet high.

And then our rage we lower a small peg.
Is this not empire and contempt of wealth?

Bdelycleon.

This too, thy second saying, I inscribe
"Contempt of wealth"—and reckon o'er to me
The profits of thine empire over Greece.

Philocleon.

The children's puberty we may inspect;
And if to his defence *Cægrus*¹ come,
He's not dismiss'd e'er he recite to us
Some sweet selected part from Niobe.
And if the piper gain his cause, he gives
To us his judges, as a recompence,
With mouth well fortified, a parting strain.
And if a father at his death bequeath
To any one his daughter, and sole heiress,
Bidding the testament bewail at length,
And shell² that nicely covers o'er the seals
We give her to that man, whose supplication
Shall have persuaded us, and this we do
Quite irresponsible—a privilege
To none inferior.

Bdelycleon.

I wish thee joy,
For this and all the blessings thou hast nam'd;
But thou dost wrong in shelling up the will
Regarding the sole heiress.

Philocleon.

And moreover,
When in deciding on some great affair,
The senate and the people are in doubt,

¹ *Cægrus*, a tragic actor.

² The ancients were in the habit of covering the signature and seals of their important acts with shells, in order to preserve them from injury.

It is decreed to render up the culprits,
 To us their judges—then Evathlus,¹ and
 That mighty cringing shield-rejecting fellow
 Declare 'tis not their purpose to betray us,
 But for the democratic state to fight ;
 And no opinion with the crowd prevail'd,
 But that which said the bench should be dismiss'd,
 Soon as the judges had dispatch'd one cause.
 And Cleon, who in bawling conquers all,
 At us alone gnaws not, but with his hand
 Protecting, drives away from us the flies.

Bdelycleon.

Speak to satiety—for thou, at length
 Wilt surely cease from thine illustrious rule,
 And in unwashen nakedness appear.

Philocleon.

But the most sweet of all I had forgot—
 When I go home having received my fee,
 And all salute me for the money's sake ;
 Then first of all my daughter washes me,
 Anoints my feet, and stooping kisses me ;
 Then at the same time, calling me “papa,”
 She baits her tongue for my triobolus ;
 And my cajoling little wife brings to me
 A cake of kneaded flour, while sitting near,
 She presses me with—“eat this, taste of that”—
 Thus am I gratified, and not compell'd
 To look towards thee and the steward, what time
 He serves the dinner, muttering out an oath,
 Lest haply, he should bake another for me.

Chorus.

Ne'er have we heard,
 A man so clearly, or so wisely talk.

¹ Evathlus, a rhetorician, and a sycophant often lampooned by the comic writers of his time.

Philocleon.

No—but he thought to make an easy vintage
Of a deserted vine. For well he knew
That I was most prevailing in this art.

Chorus.

How hath he gone through all, and pass'd by nothing!
So that I grew in hearing, and appear'd
To hold a session in the happy isles,¹
Delighted with his words.

Philocleon.

How he begins
To yawn, and is not master of himself!
I'll make thee look to-day as at the lash.

Chorus to Bdelycleon.

And it behoves thee all deceits to weave
For thine acquittal—since 'tis difficult
To mollify my rage, unless thy words
Regard my interest.

Bdelycleon.

'Tis a hard task, and one that asks more counsel
Than comedy can boast to heal an ill,
Which, in the state, has long bred inwardly.
But O! Saturnian sire!

Philocleon.

Cease, sire not me.

For if o' th' instant, thou instruct me not
How I should be a slave, it cannot chance
But thou must die, tho' from the sacred entrails
It were my destiny to be remov'd.

Bdelycleon.

Hear then, O sire, relax thy front awhile,
And first count lightly, not with calculi,
But on the fingers, what a sum of tribute
Comes to us from the cities, and besides,

¹ Alluding to the judges in the shades below—see the poetical description in Pindar's second Olympic ode.

The many hundredths, prytanean pledges,
 The metals, markets, harbours, salaries,
 And sales of public confiscations.
 From these we nearly draw two thousand talents.
 Deposit thence the judges' yearly pay,
 Who sojourn here, six thousand and no more,
 Yours are one hundred then and fifty talents.

Philocleon.

Then not the tenth part comes to us for fee.¹

Bdelycleon.

No truly—and where fly the other moneys?

Philocleon.

To those whose cry is—"I will not betray
 Th' Athenian people, but will always fight
 To aid the multitude."

Bdelycleon.

These, O my father,
 Thou choosest to rule over thee, deceiv'd
 By such slight words: they then receive in bribes
 Talents by fifties, from the other states,
 Whom with such threats as these they terrify,
 "Pay tribute, or I'll thunder down your city."
 And thou'rt content to eat up the remains
 Of thy dominion; the allies meanwhile,
 When they perceive the refuse of the crowd
 With hunger pining, gnaw the ballot box,
 Regard thee as the suffrages of Connus,²
 But bring them presents—pickle, jars, wine, carpets,
 Cheese, honey, sesamum, cushions, cups, cloaks,
 Chaplets, chains, goblets, wealth, and sanity.
 To thee, of all whom thou command'st on earth,

¹ About £45 per annum of our money for each of the six thousand judges.

² Connus. A young man who had wasted his patrimony, and become a pauper.

And all thy toils at sea achiev'd, not one
Presents to cook thy fish, a head of garlick.

Philocleon.

Not so, by Jove—but from Eucharides¹
I have myself sent for three garlick heads,
But thou annoyest me, not showing forth
This slavery of mine.

Bdelycleon.

Is it not great
That those who rule themselves, and flatterers all
Are brib'd alike? To thee should any one
Give the three oboli, art thou content
With pay which fighting or besieging towns,
By labour manifold thou hast achiev'd?
But late as he may come, the advocate
Receives his drachma as the pleader's fee.²
And with another of the Archons, sharing
What an acquitted culprit may bestow,
You two arrange together the affair,
While like a saw one gives, and one withdraws it.
Thy gaping look observes the treasurer,
But the manœuvre still escapes thy notice.

Philocleon.

Is't thus they treat me? What, alas! say'st thou,
Stirring the very bottom of my soul?
My mind thou so attractest, that I know not
What 'tis thou do'st to me.

Bdelycleon.

Consider then,
That, when thou might'st with all the world grow rich,
Thou'rt always compass'd round by demagogues,

¹ Eucharides, a seller of garlick.

² Drachma, a silver coin of 7½d. or 8d. value. This was the daily sum granted to the forensic orators. Aristotle tells us that they were ten in number, and chosen by lot.

Who over many cities bearest sway,
 From Pontus to Sardinia—thou hast nought
 To make thee glad, save the small salary
 Which thou receiv'st—and that by little still
 They squeeze for thee in drops, as out of wool,
 Like oil, for the support of thine existence.
 For they would have thee poor—and for what reason
 I will declare to thee—that thou may'st know
 Thy keeper, and when he shall hiss thee on,
 Leap savagely upon thine enemies.
 If they desir'd to give the people food,
 Nothing were easier—since a thousand cities
 Convey us tribute; if to each of these,
 The charge were given to nourish twenty men,
 Two hundred thousand of the citizens
 Had liv'd on hare's flesh—with all sorts of crowns
 And early and coagulated milk;¹
 Enjoying pleasure worthy of our land,
 And of the trophy gain'd in Marathon;
 And now like olive-gatherers, ye go
 In company with him who bears the fee.

Philocleon.

Alas! what torpor's o'er my hand diffus'd!
 I'm now so soft that I cannot hold my sword.

Bdelycleon.

But when in fear, Eubœa they would give you,
 And promise to grant corn by fifty bushels;
 Yet they give nothing, save of late five bushels
 Of barley thou receivedst, and scarce these,
 (Convicted as a stranger) by the chænix.
 On this account I keep thee here confin'd,
 Wishing to nourish, and not expose thee
 To be the sport of these vain promisers.

¹ Early and coagulated milk. The word *πρῶν* literally signifies, the first drawn milk after calving, and *πυρραγῆς* scalded cream.

Philocleon.

Rather a dog's death should he once be taken.

Bdelycleon.

Well, the defendant Labes¹ is in the court.

Philocleon.

O wretch impure ! how like a thief he looks !
Grinding his teeth he thinks he shall deceive me.
But where is the Cydathenæan dog,
Who prosecutes ?

Dog.

Bow, wow !

Bdelycleon.

This other Labes
Is here—skill'd both to bark and lick the dishes.

Sosias. (as a herald.)

Silence, sit down, ascend thou and accuse him.

Xanthias.

O judges, this our written accusation
Ye hath heard already, for he hath treated
Me and the sailors most unworthily ;
Running into a corner he hath eaten
In the Sicilian fashion, a huge cheese,
And in his dark retreat hath fill'd himself.

Philocleon.

By Jupiter 'tis true—this nasty fellow
Hath just now belch'd against me, his cheese odour.

Aristophanes must have been perfectly acquainted with the feelings of his countrymen, otherwise he would not have exhibited any thing so daring and sarcastic as the above, however faithful the likeness may have been.

The other comedies remaining to us of this poet are—
The Acharnians—The Knights—The Peace—The Birds—

¹ Laches, who conducted the expedition to Sicily in the second year of the 88th Olympiad, is here designed by the dog Labes.

The Thesmophoriazussæ—Lysistrata — The Frogs — The Female Haranguers—and Plutus.

The Acharnians.—This comedy was acted in the third year of the 88th Olympiad, and the sixth of the Peloponnesian war, at the Lenæan feasts; and was written by Aristophanes to show the evils arising from a continuation of the war. Dicæopolis, a citizen, whose patience becomes exhausted at the false pretexts with which the people are put off, and all terms of peace thwarted, sends an embassy to Lacedæmon, and concludes a separate peace for himself and his family. He then returns into the country, and in defiance of all disturbances, makes an enclosure before his house, within which there is peace, and a market for the neighbouring people, while the rest of the country is harassed by the war. The advantages of peace are clearly exhibited to hungry people; the fat Boeotian brings his eels and poultry for sale, and nothing is thought of but revelling and feasting. Lamachus, the general, who lives on the other side, is called to repel a sudden attack of the enemy, while Dicæopolis is invited by his neighbours to a feast, to which each brings his contribution. The preparations for arms, and those for the table, go on with equal diligence on both sides. Lamachus returns with a broken head, and wounded foot, supported by two soldiers; on the other side, Dicæopolis appears tipsy, and led by two kind-hearted damsels. The contrast between the lamentations of the one, and the exultations of the other, is carried to the highest point.

*The Knights.*¹—This piece takes its name from the order, second in rank among the Athenian people, called the Hip-podaielountes, or Knights, who were in time of war obliged to find a horse, and serve in the cavalry. It is a severe satire

¹ This piece was acted in the seventh year of the Peloponnesian war.

upon Cleon, treasurer-general of the army. A personal hatred, as much as a wish for the public service, induced Aristophanes to inveigh so bitterly against this powerful man. Cleon had accused the poet of a serious crime, and disputed his right to the freedom of the city; he was a demagogue of a haughty and overbearing disposition, the son of a currier, and actually exercising that trade; and had raised himself by intrigue and flattery till he became in a great measure master of the state; he was at the height of his glory when the poet attacked him, not indirectly, but by presenting him openly upon the stage; although he had the prudence not to name him personally, but to describe him so that he could not be mistaken. His only adversaries were the more wealthy men of property, the Knights, and these Aristophanes blended with his party, by making them his chorus. The poet himself was obliged to play the part of Cleon, and for that purpose he mounted the stage for the first time; none of the comedians daring to perform the character, or expose themselves to the vengeance of so formidable an individual. Not being able to find a workman bold enough to make a mask resembling Cleon, as they usually did for all whose characters were represented, he bedaubed his face, and appeared without one. Cleon is reproached with speculation, eagerness in accepting presents, address in seducing the people, and taking to himself the merit of actions which he did not deserve. After a storm of bitter sarcasm, the droller scenes follow, where the two demagogues, Cleon, and his antagonist, a sausage-maker, by adulation, prophecies, and dainties, vie with each other in wooing the favour of an old dotard, Demos, the representative of the Athenian people. An extraordinary alteration, however, takes place towards the conclusion of the play;¹ the scene changes from the Pnyx, the place of the popular assemblies, to the majestic

¹ The choral song at the end of this comedy is wanting.

Propylæa, and Demos restored to youth and sense, comes forward in the dress of the old Athenians, expressing the sentiments of the days of Marathon.

The Peace.—This comedy is of the same description as the *Acharnians*, and nearly on the same subject. The poet himself has fixed the date of it in the thirteenth year of the Peloponnesian war, at which period the Athenians, notwithstanding their pride, having suffered considerable reverses, were becoming weary of the contest. Cleon and Brasidas were dead, the former the general of the Athenian people, and the latter of the Lacedæmonians. The design of Aristophanes was to disgust his countrymen more and more with a ruinous warfare, and to inspire them with a love of peace, equally desirable for the conquerors and the conquered. “*The Peace*” begins in a curious and lively manner, the war-hating Trygæus riding to heaven on the back of an immense beetle, in the manner of Bellerophon. Arriving there he is told by Mercury that the gods had departed from home, leaving him to guard their furniture, pipkins, cans, and little wooden tables, with the exception of War, a wild giant, and his comrade Tumult, who are the sole inhabitants of Olympus. The former is pounding the cities in a large mortar, in which operation he uses the generals as his pestles. The goddess of peace lies buried in a deep well, whence she is hauled up with ropes, by the united exertions of the various Greek states. Such ingenious and fantastic scenes were likely to produce an amusing effect; the poetry, however, does not keep up in elevation with a beginning of so much promise. Nothing remains but to sacrifice to the new found goddess, while the pressing visits of the parties who found their advantage in the war, form a pleasing entertainment, but not a satisfactory conclusion.

The Birds.—This allegorical piece was performed in the eighteenth year of the Peloponnesian war. Alcibiades,

one of the commanders of the Athenian expedition against Sicily, was accused just before the sailing of the expedition, of having mutilated and disfigured the statues of Mercury; he denied the accusation, and demanded a trial before leaving Athens, which was refused through the intrigues and fears of his enemies. He was obliged to sail, and in his absence the charges were renewed, and in consequence the Salaminian galley was sent to bring him home. Alcibiades knowing the superstition of his countrymen, dreading their resentment, and enraged at their conduct, escaped to Sparta, and to obtain his revenge he encouraged the Lacedæmonians to undertake three successful and fatal expeditions against the Athenians. The first was to succour Sicily, the second to attack his country at home, and the third, the most important of all, to fortify Decelea, which being in the neighbourhood of Athens, was productive of great injury to that commonwealth. "The Lacedæmonians," says Cornelius Nepos, "by the advice of Alcibiades, made an alliance with the king of Persia, fortified Delecea in Attica, placed there a strong garrison, by which means they held Athens in continual check, and after having detached the Ionians from the interests of their rival, they assured themselves of the empire of Greece against Athens." The design of fortifying Delecea was on the point of being executed when Aristophanes brought forward this comedy; he foresaw the fatal consequences of it, and composed this allegorical piece to expose the project, with the ambition of Lacedæmon, and to warn Athens of the misfortunes which threatened her, if Delecea became an arsenal of the former people. The comedy of *The Birds* sparkles with the exertions of a bold and rich imagination, it shows the two particular qualifications of Aristophanes, fire and strength, to great effect. There is a touch at every thing, gods and men; all that was remarkable in the stories about birds, in natural history, in mythology, augury, Æsop's fables, or even in proverbial expressions, the poet has blended in this piece; it is a

merry, buoyant creation, bright with the gayest plumage in the fantastically marvellous. The Subject.—Two fugitives of the human species, find their way into the territory of The Birds, who are determined to take vengeance on them, for all the injuries they have suffered from man; the captives save themselves by showing that The Birds are pre-eminent above all creatures, and advise them to collect their scattered powers into one enormous state, which leads to the wondrous city Nephelococcygia (cloud-cuckoo-town,) being built upon earth; all descriptions of unbidden guests, priests, soothsayers, geometricians, poets, sycophants, and lawyers, wish to feather their nests in the new state, but are ordered away. New gods are ordained after the image of birds, as mankind had made theirs after the form of human beings; the frontier of Olympus is walled up against the old gods, so that no savour of sacrifice could reach them, consequently they are brought into great distress, and send an embassy, consisting of Hercules, Neptune, and a Thracian god, who talks Greek indifferently, but discourses gibberish; these, however, are compelled to put up with whatever terms The Birds please to offer, and to leave them the sovereignty of the world. It is evident from this play, that the poet was not a superstitious man, but was quite aware of the folly of Greek mythology.

The Thesmophoriazusaë,¹ or the Feasts of Ceres and Proserpine.—These lasted five days at Athens during the month of Pyanepsion (part of October and November) and one day of the five was kept as a fast. None but women were allowed to be present at the celebration of these mysteries; a similar prohibition took place among the Romans at the feasts of the Bona Dea. This comedy is not honourable to Aristophanes, it is a bitter satire on Euripides. The women are represented as the enemies of the

¹ It was acted at the festival of the Dionysia in the 21st year of the Peloponnesian war.

enemies of the poet, and employed in deliberating on his ruin. There is much cutting ridicule, and the parodied scenes composed almost in the same words of the tragedies of Euripides are exceedingly clever. That great author was very old at the time, and the malicious attempt of Aristophanes did him little or no injury.

Lysistrata.¹—This comedy takes its name from Lysistrata, the wife of one of the principal Athenian magistrates. The women, according to the poet's invention, being tired of the war, determine to refuse their husbands the rites of marriage till peace be made. Under the guidance of their clever leader, they organize a conspiracy for this object throughout all Greece, and in Athens they get possession of the fortified Acropolis. The sad plight to which their husbands are reduced, occasions very ridiculous scenes; ambassadors pass between the different parties, and the peace is quickly concluded under the direction of Lysistrata. The bold grossness of this comedy, does not convey a favourable idea of the delicacy of manners in ancient Greece.

The Frogs.²—This play is upon the decline of the tragic art. Sophocles and Euripides were dead, and none remained but second-rate tragedians. Bacchus missing Euripides, wishes to bring him back from the other world; he therefore, in imitation of Hercules, equips himself with the lion's hide, and club of that hero; but as he is very unlike him in character, and a cowardly voluptuary, he gives rise to much laughter. The boldness of Aristophanes is here strikingly shown; he does not scruple to attack the guardian god of

¹ This comedy was acted at the Lenæan feasts, in the 21st year of the Peloponnesian war.

² This comedy was acted in the twenty-sixth year of the Peloponnesian war, and the third year of the 93rd Olympiad. It gained the prize at the Lenæan games over the muses of Phrynichus, and the Cleophon of Plato. It was also played a second time, a strong testimony of its superior merit.

his own art, in honour of whom the play was exhibited. It was the common belief in his time, that the gods understood and liked fun, as well, if not better than men. Bacchus rows himself over the Acherusian lake, where the frogs do not fail to greet him with their unmelodious croaking. To the proper chorus, however, the shades of the initiated in the Eleusinian mysteries, odes of great beauty are assigned. Æschylus had at first assumed the tragic throne in the lower world, but now Euripides appears desirous of thrusting him from it. Pluto proposes that Bacchus should decide the contest between these two great poets. Æschylus and Euripides stand opposite each other, and submit specimens of their art; they sing and declaim against each other, and all their features are characterized in a masterly style. At last a balance is brought, on which each lays a verse; but whatever pains Euripides takes to produce his best lines, a verse of Æschylus instantly jerks up the scale, and here becomes evident the ill-will which Aristophanes still entertained towards Euripides. At length Æschylus grows weary of the contest, and tells Euripides that he may mount into the balance himself, with all his works, his wife and children, and he will lay against them only two verses. Bacchus in the meantime has gone over to the cause of Æschylus, and although he had sworn to Euripides that he would bring him back with him to this world, he dismisses him with an allusion from his tragedy of Hippolytus. Æschylus therefore returns to the earth, and resigns the tragic throne to Sophocles during his absence. This comedy is written with much care, its style is clear, the dialogue lively, and the interest well sustained.

The Female Haranguers,¹ or Women in Council Assembled.

— This comedy contains the most violent satire extant against women; and Lysistrata is somewhat in the same

¹ Performed in the fourth year of the 96th Olympiad.

style; Euripides, who is known to have been no admirer of the sex, never wrote anything so severe. The object of this piece is to turn into ridicule the system of Plato, in favour of a community of wealth, women, and children; it is also a satire upon the ideal republics of the philosophers. The introduction, the private assembly of the women, and the description of it, are all ably treated, but towards the middle it falls off. Little now remains but to exhibit the confusion arising from the different communities, particularly that of the females, and the appointment of the same rights in love for the old and ugly, as for the young and beautiful, which is amusing enough.

Plutus.— This play has not a political tendency like others of Aristophanes, but is of general application; it was acted in the fourth year of the 97th Olympiad; it is neither slanderous nor satirical, and the personal raillery which occasionally occurs is not violent. The subject is that of a peasant having met a blind man, and finding that he is Plutus, or the god of riches, his sight is restored, and he is looked up to with such reverence as to be worshipped in the place of Jupiter. The great object which Aristophanes had in view, was to reprove his countrymen, who were devoted to Plutus, as if he were their only divinity, and to ridicule the extraordinary preference shown to wealth, rather than to mediocrity: he has employed the most cutting ridicule in the language used by poverty regarding the homage paid to riches, and the abuse of them. In this comedy the characters are well arranged, the scenes agreeably varied, while the expression is pure and elegant. In closing the works of Aristophanes, it is only justice to mention, that he strenuously endeavoured to give the Athenians most useful lessons, and often displays in the happiest manner his valuable art of impressing truth on that sovereign people.

Menander flourished 324 B. C.

This poet was born at Athens, in the year of the 109th Olympiad, or 344 years B. C. It is stated that his first comedy was exhibited the third of the 114th Olympiad, or 324 years before the Christian era, when he was only twenty years of age. He is looked up to as the founder and prince of the new comedy, in which was banished all personal satire, it being confined to a delineation of manners. Menander possessed a copiousness of invention, a vein of the most delicate wit, a happy elegance of expression, with the utmost purity of moral sentiment. Unfortunately only a few fragments remain to us of his works, although he wrote upwards of one hundred comedies; we are enabled to judge of his merits, however, from his copyist and translator Terence, to whom Julius Cæsar, when addressing himself in a compliment, calls "Dimidiate Menander," Half Menander. He died 292 B. C. at fifty-two years of age.

ILLUSTRATIONS FROM THE FRAGMENTS OF MENANDER.

The Pleasures of Solitude.

How sweet and pleasant to a man endued
 With moral goodness, is deep solitude.
 Pensive to rove, not meditating harm,
 And live in affluence at his country farm.
 For in large cities where the many bide,
 Self-cankering envy dwells, and high-blown pride :
 There lull'd in all the luxury of ease,
 They live at large, licentious as they please ;
 Yet soon these pleasures pall, and quick decay,
 Like the light blaze that crackling dies away.

The Misery and Folly of Man.

Lord of creation, man !—come, all things see
 Exceed in happiness and wisdom thee.
 Behold yon ass, to whom thy partial race
 Gives in the world of life the lowest place ;



Thou call'st him wretched, and I grant him so,
 But not from self his pitied sufferings flow;
 Beneath stern nature's load the wretch may groan,
 Yet wisely still adds nothing of his own:
 But man, alas! besides his natural share,
 Makes half those evils he repines to bear.
 Does any sneeze?¹ grief turns the hearers pale;
 We burn with anger if the world should rail:
 Unlucky dreams with terror fill the soul;
 We tremble at the hooting of an owl:
 By contests, prejudices, pride, and law,
 Unnumber'd evils on ourselves we draw.

Worship due to the Deity.

Serve then the great first Cause whence nature springs,
 Th' almighty fire, th' eternal King of kings;
 Who gave us being, and who gives us food,
 Lord of all life, and author of all good!

Man Unhappy as compared with other Creatures.

If to my choice indulgent heaven would give,
 This life worn out, another life to live,
 And say, 'Partake what from delights thee best,
 'Be man again, again with reason blest,
 'Assume the horse's strength, the sheep's warm coat,
 'Bark in the dog, or wanton in the goat;
 'For this is fate's immutable decree,
 'And one more being is reserv'd for thee;
 To bounteous heav'n I'd thus prefer my pray'r—
 'O let not reason's lamp be lighted here!
 'Make me not man; his only partial race
 'Holds vice in credit, virtue in disgrace.
 'The steed victorious in the rapid course,
 'Eats food more dainty than the sluggish horse:
 'Is there a dog distinguish'd for his smell?
 'No common dog will ever fare so well:

¹ Sneezing was commonly reckoned an ill omen among the ancients.

'The gallant cock that boasts heroic blood,
 'Rakes not in dirty dunghills for his food;
 'And should he strut among the feather'd crew,
 'Each conscious brother pays him honour due.
 'Man, though of each accomplishment possess,
 'Renown'd for valour, and with virtue blest,
 'Gains from the heedless world no due regard,
 'His worth no praise, his valour no reward:
 'While fawning flatterers bask in fortune's ray
 'Knaves that detract, and villains that betray.
 'Tis better far through any form to pass,
 'To crawl a reptile, or to drudge an ass,
 'Than see base miscreants, guilt's abandon'd crew,
 'Enjoy those honours that are virtue's due.'

On Evil Company.

Let not false arguments thy reason blind,
 For evil converse taints the virtuous mind.¹

ON MENANDER.

From a Greek Epigram in the Anthologia.

On thy sweet lips the bees in clusters hung,
 And dropp'd Hyblæan honey on thy tongue;
 For thee the muses pluck'd Pierian flowers;
 The graces woo'd thee in sequester'd bowers:
 Ages to come shall celebrate thy name,
 And Athens gather glory from thy fame.

The name of Menander, from the praises lavished on him in ancient and modern times, suggests to us a complete model of gaiety; we are entitled from the universal assent of his contemporaries to expect this quality in a writer to whom it was said so eminently to belong. Gloomy and melancholy as he now appears to us, he was once, according

¹ St. Paul appears to have copied this sentence from Menander, *φθειρουσιν ηθη χρησθ' ομιλαιοι κακοι*, which are the very words of our author, "Evil communications corrupt good manners," 1 Cor. xv. 33.

to Pliny, "Omnis luxuriæ interpres;" and in the language of Plutarch, "the constant worshipper, the chief priest of the god of love, who, like some universal spirit, pervaded and connected all his works." "In supporting the character of fathers, sons, husbands, soldiers, peasants, the rich and the poor, the violent and the gentle, Menander surpassed all in consistency, and by the brilliance of his imagery threw every rival into the shade;" such is the character given of him by Quintilian. Yet his ideas were considered so delicate and pure, that his writings were placed without scruple in the hands of youths and virgins. Time, alas! has revelled fearfully on the noble image of this great poet; it has preyed on all that was inviting in his aspect, sparing little else than his frowns and wrinkles. What a sad proof is here presented of the instability of fortune, when we find that of his voluminous works, the monuments by which he hoped to be immortalized, only fragments enough remain to present to our view the very reverse of that which they were designed to perpetuate! Where are the perfumes, the breathings of gallantry and tenderness, the sprightly sallies of wit, and all the apparatus of youth and delight, that conveyed and recommended morality to the gay and thoughtless, by attiring her in a dress that fascinated her beholders? It is certain that the strikingly moral passages with which the works of this poet abounded, caught the attention of the fathers of the primitive church, who found in the Greek comedian a strain of piety so nearly approaching to their own feelings, that the idea of a preponderance of satire over moral precept, must yield to evidence, so irresistible, as the approbation of Clemens Alexandrinus and Eusebius.

It is from the writings of the melancholy, and of the religious, that we are furnished with our specimens of Menander; and doubtless it would have been a great gain to posterity had the gay, the lively, and the witty finished

his portrait, by transmitting to after ages examples that might enable us to measure him by the standards of humour, sprightliness, and fancy. Menander was drowned in the harbour of the Piræus at a time of life, when he had done enough for immortality, but whilst his powers were unimpaired by age, and his genius sufficiently ardent to do still more. He is to be classed in the unfortunate list of great men to whom the jealousy, bad taste, or vices of the times in which they lived denied justice; and to whose names fame and honour are attached, when they are beyond the enjoyment of them.

CHAPTER IX.

OTHER POETS OF GREECE,

NOT USUALLY MENTIONED IN THE FIRST OR GRECIAN AGE OF LEARNING—BION, MOSCHUS, CALLIMACHUS, APOLLONIUS RHODIUS, AND MELEAGER—ILLUSTRATIONS.

Bion flourished 280 B. C.

This bucolic poet was born at Smyrna, in Asia Minor; it appears that he spent great part of his life in Sicily; he was contemporary with Theocritus; little, however, is known regarding him. Of his works there are still extant nine Idyllia, and a few fragments; the former combine much beauty, sweetness, and delicacy. It is stated that he died by poison.

“ O hapless Bion! poison was thy fate;
The baneful poison circumscrib'd thy date.
How could fell poison cause effect so strange,
Touch thy sweet lips, and not to honey change?

In the third Idyllium of Theocritus, called *Amaryllis*, that poet says,

Adonis fed his flocks upon the plain,
Yet heavenly Venus lov'd the shepherd swain;

She mourn'd him wounded in the fatal chace,
Nor dead dismiss'd him from her warm embrace.

And Bion, in his first Idyllium, "The Death of Adonis," which has been esteemed one of the finest remains of antiquity, in allusion to the last line of the above, puts the following beautiful words into the mouth of Venus:—

Raise, lov'd Adonis, raise thy drooping head,
And kiss me ere thy parting breath be fled;
The last fond token of affection give,
O kiss thy Venus, while the kisses live;
Till in my breast I draw thy lingering breath,
And with my lips imbibe thy love in death.

IDYLLIUM IX.

On Friendship.

Thrice happy they! whose friendly hearts can burn
With purest flame, and meet a kind return;
With dear Pirithous, as poets know,
Theseus was happy in the shades below;
Orestes' soul no fears, no woes deprest,
'Midst Scythians, he with Pylades blest.
Blest was Achilles while his friend surviv'd,
Blest was Patroclus every hour he liv'd:
Blest when in battle he resign'd his breath,
For his unconquer'd friend reveng'd his death.

Moschus flourished 272 B.C.

This poet was a disciple of Bion, and wrote a beautiful elegy on the death of his preceptor; he was a native of Syracuse, but changed his residence to Magna Græcia; he was also contemporary with Theocritus. Of the writings of Moschus we have still left to us nine Idyllia and an epigram; and although the remains of this poet, with those of Bion, are not admitted by some of the learned as true pastorals, they are allowed to be beautiful poems.

Elegy on the Death of Bion, classed as the fourth Idyllium.

Ye woods, with grief your waving summits bow,
 Ye Dorian fountains, murmur as ye flow,
 From weeping urns your copious sorrows shed,
 And bid the rivers mourn for Bion dead :
 Ye shady groves, in robe of sable hue
 Bewail ; ye plants, in pearly drops of dew :
 Ye drooping flowers, diffuse a languid breath,
 And die with sorrow at sweet Bion's death.

* *

Alas ! the meanest flowers which gardens yield,
 The vilest weeds that flourish in the field,
 Which dead in wintry sepulchres appear,
 Revive in spring, and bloom another year :
 But we, the great, the brave, the learn'd, the wise,
 Soon as the hand of death has closed our eyes,
 In tombs forgotten lie, no suns restore,
 We sleep, for ever sleep, to rise no more.¹

¹ This mournfully elegant sentiment has been embellished by various authors, Shakspeare, Spencer, Catullus, Job, &c.

Thus Catullus—

*Soles occidere et redire possunt :
 Nobis, cum semel occidit brevis lux,
 Nox est perpetua una dormienda.*

“ The sun that sinks into the main,
 Sets with fresh light to rise again ;
 But we when once our breath is fled,
 Die, and are number'd with the dead ;
 With endless night we close our day,
 And sleep eternity away.”

And in Job, chapter 14th. “ Man cometh forth as a flower, and is cut down. There is hope of a tree if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. But man dieth and wasteth away ; yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he ? He lieth down, and riseth not, till the heavens be no more.”

IDYLLIUM V.

The Choice.

When zephyrs gently curl the azure main,
 On land, impatient, I can scarce sustain
 At ease to dwell ; a calm yields more delight :
 But when old ocean to a mountain's height
 Rolls, with tremendous roar, his foaming floods,
 I loathe the sea, and sigh for fields and woods.
 Safe is the land ; then piny forests please,
 Though hoarse winds whistle through the bending trees.
 Hapless the fisher's life ! the sea his toil,
 His house a bark, and faithless fish his spoil.
 But O ! to me how sweet are slumbers, laid
 Beneath a lofty plane's embowering shade ;
 And thence the tinkling of a rill to hear,
 Whose sound gives pleasure unallay'd by fear !

Callimachus flourished 270 B. C.

This poet was a native of Cyrene, the famous city of ancient Lybia; we are not acquainted with the particular year of his birth, although it is known that his fame commenced under the patronage of Ptolemy Philadelphus, and continued in the reign of his successor Ptolemy Evergetes; he was appointed one of the keepers of the Alexandrian library. Before Callimachus was recommended to the favour of the Egyptian court, he taught a school at Alexandria, and educated Apollonius, the author of the *Argonautics*, who making him an unkind requital for his labour, provoked our poet to vent his anger in an invective poem against his ungrateful scholar, under the reproachful name of Ibis, which furnished Ovid with a pattern and title for his biting piece of the same nature. Of all the writings of Callimachus we have only remaining a few hymns and epigrams. In regard to the former, a very high authority,¹

¹ Dr. W. H. Tytler.

says, "It is evident to every person of learning and taste, that the style of ancient poetry is greatly superior to that of the modern; and that those who can enable the unlearned to taste of the beauties of the Greek and Roman poets of eminence in modern languages, are entitled to no vulgar praise. The beautiful hymn of Callimachus, where he celebrates the praises of Ptolemy Philadelphus, infinitely degrades our modern 'Joys to Cæsar,' not on account of its superior veracity, but the beauty and simplicity of its construction, devoid of that cumbersome and nauseous machinery of extravagant encomium; on account of which a modern man of taste cannot help wishing to bury the Laureates, and the Laurell'd in obscurity. Indeed Voltaire's specimen¹ of an ode, in the address to the proud man in *Zadig*, contains an everlasting model for the instruction of Laureates, in the composition of their vile madrigals to princes."

HYMN FIRST—TO JUPITER.

And in which the praise of Ptolemy Philadelphus is introduced with great art. Callimachus raises his noble patron to a deity, as much as a mortal man can be exalted, by making him the supreme power on earth, as Jupiter is in heaven.

Whilst we to Jove immortal and divine,
Perform the rites, and pour the ruddy wine;
Whom shall the muse, with sacred rapture sing,
But Jove th' almighty and eternal king,
Who from high heav'n, with bursting thunder, hurl'd
The sons of earth, and awes th' etherial world!

* *

¹ Que son merite est extrême,
Que des graces que des grandeurs,
Ah! combien Monseigneur,
Doit etre content de lui même.

Though mighty Jove! thy scepter'd sons obtain
 Abundant wealth, and means of glory gain,
 Yet all receive not, by thy great decree,
 An equal share of splendid pomp from thee;
 For warlike Philadelphus reigns alone,
 And pow'r supreme supports his sacred throne:
 Glad ev'ning still beholds the vast designs
 Complete, to which his morning thought inclines,
 Beholds complete in one revolving sun,
 What others, in long ages, but begun.
 For Jove, in wrath, makes other kings to mourn,
 Their counsels blasted, and their hopes forlorn.
 Hail! mighty king; hail! great Saturnian Jove,
 Who sends life, health, and safety from above;
 Thy glorious acts transcending human tongue,
 Nor were, nor shall by mortal bard be sung!
 O, from thy bright abode let blessings flow;
 Grant wealth, grant virtue to mankind below:
 For we with wealth are not completely blest,
 And virtue fails when wealth is unpossess'd;
 Then grant us both; for these united prove
 The choicest blessing man receives from Jove.

HYMN SECOND—TO APOLLO.

This beautiful hymn ends with the victory of Apollo over Python, but Callimachus has added a satire on his ungrateful pupil, Apollonius Rhodius, who had endeavoured to prejudice their common patron Ptolemy against our own author on account of the brevity of his poems, which Callimachus considered an excellence; and we learn from Athenæus that he introduced the quaint saying, "A great book is a great evil." He both ridicules his adversary, and celebrates his patron, by comparing the former to Python, and the latter to Apollo; and by the fate of *Μαῖμος*, or envy, we are informed that the insidious attempts of his enemy proved unsuccessful.

What force, what sudden impulse thus can make
 The laurel-branch, and all the temple shake!
 Depart, ye souls profane; hence, hence! O fly
 Far from this holy place! Apollo's nigh:¹
 He knocks with gentle foot; the Delian palm
 Submissive bends, and breathes a sweeter balm.
 Begin, young men, begin the sacred song,
 Wake all your lyres, and to the dances throng,
 Remembering still, the Pow'r is seen by none
 Except the just and innocent alone.

* *

An equal foe,² pale envy, late drew near,
 And thus suggested in Apollo's ear;
 I hate the bard, who pours not forth his song,
 In swelling numbers, loud, sublime, and strong;
 No lofty lay should in low murmurs glide
 But wild as waves, and sounding as the tide.
 Fierce with his foot, indignant Phœbus spurn'd
 Th' insidious monster, and in wrath return'd;
 Wide rolls Euphrates' wave, but soil'd with mud,
 And dust and slime pollute the swelling flood:
 For Ceres still the fair Melissæ bring
 The purest water from the smallest spring,
 That softly murm'ring creeps along the plain,
 And falls with gentle cadence to the main.
 Propitious Phœbus! thus thy pow'r extend,
 And soon shall envy to the shades descend.

¹ It has already been mentioned, that the adoration paid to Apollo, or the sun, was the most ancient and universal species of idolatry; it is therefore no wonder that this hymn should have been ranked among the most celebrated productions of our poet. It was held in such estimation by the ancients, as to be sung for ages at the festivals of this deity in the different countries of Greece.

² To Python the serpent.

HYMN THIRD.

This hymn to Diana, or the Moon, has been reckoned one of the finest poems of antiquity, and superior to either of the former. The poet has exerted all his powers in celebrating this famous divinity, who was supposed to be a female; and therefore he represents her both as the moon, and as a beautiful female, possessed of many amiable qualifications.

Though great Apollo claim the poet's lyre,
Yet cold neglect may tempt Diana's ire,
Come, virgin goddess, and inspire my song,
To you the chace, the sylvan dance belong.

* *

Thrice happy nations, where with look benign
Your aspect bends; beneath your smiles divine
The fields are with increasing harvests crown'd,
The flocks grow fast, and plenty reigns around.
Nor sire, nor infant-son black death shall crave,
Till ripe with age they drop into the grave;
Nor fell suspicion, nor relentless care,
Nor peace-destroying discord enter there;
But friends and brothers, wives and sisters join
The feast in concord and in love divine.
O! grant your bard, and the distinguish'd few
His chosen friends, these happy climes to view;
So shall Apollo's love, Diana's praise,
And fair Latona's nuptial grace my lays.

* *

What city, mountain, or what sacred isle,
What harbour boasts your most auspicious smile?
And of th' attendant nymphs, that sportful rove
Along the hills, who most enjoys your love,
O goddess tell: If you inspire their praise,
Admiring nations will attend my lays.

AN EPIGRAM.

This excellent epigram has been much celebrated by ancient poets and philosophers, and also by modern commentators, particularly Salmasius, who calls it “*Nobilissimum epigramma.*”

A youth in haste, to Mitylene came,
 And anxious, thus reveal'd his am'rous flame
 To Pittacus the wise; O sacred sire,
 For two fair nymphs I burn with equal fire,
 One lovely maid in rank and wealth like me,
 But one superior, and of high degree.
 Since both return my love, and each invites
 To celebrate with her the nuptial rites,
 Perplex'd with doubts, for sage advice I come:
 Whom shall I wed? 'Tis you must fix the doom.
 So spake th' impatient youth; th' attentive sage
 Rais'd the support of his declining age,
 An ancient staff; and pointing to the ground
 Where sportive striplings lash'd their tops around
 With eager strokes; let yonder boys, he cry'd,
 Solve the dispute, and your long doubts decide.
 The youth drew nigh, and listen'd with surprise,
 Whilst from the laughing crowd these words arise,
 “Let equal tops with equal tops contend.”
 The boys prevail'd, and soon the contest end.
 The youth departing shunn'd the wealthy dame,
 And chose the inferior maid to quench his flame.

Apollonius Rhodius flourished 244 B. C.

This poet was born at Alexandria, in Egypt, and educated under Callimachus; he received the name of Rhodius, or the Rhodian, from the island of Rhodes; during his stay in that place he finished his Argonautic poem, the only one extant of his works, and founded a school of rhetoric. Ptolemy Evergetes recalled him from his retirement at Rhodes, and appointed him successor to Eratosthenes, in the care of

the Alexandrian library. The favours which had been conferred on Callimachus in the court of Ptolemy Philadelphus, were continued to him by his successor Ptolemy Evergetes; this circumstance, with others, gave occasion to those jealousies and dissensions which existed between these rival poets. Apollonius, anxious to establish his own reputation, and envious of his master's, had depreciated the more numerous but lighter productions in which the genius of Callimachus excelled, hymns, elegies, and epigrams.

The Argonautic expedition has been an admired subject of the Greek, Roman, and modern poets, from Onomacritus, who lived in the days of Pisistratus, to the present period. The elegant poem of our author has had many copyists, Virgil in his *Æneid*, Valerius Flaccus, who made choice of the same subject with the Rhodian, our own Milton, the refined and talented Camoens; Apollonius himself, however, has borrowed from Homer.

Inspir'd by thee, O Phœbus, I resound¹
 The glorious deeds of heroes long renown'd,
 Whom Pelias urg'd the golden fleece to gain,
 And well-built Argo wafted o'er the main,
 Through the Cyanean rocks. The voice divine
 Pronounc'd this sentence from the sacred shine,
 ' Ere long and dreadful woes, foredoom'd by fate,
 ' Through that man's counsels shall on Pelias wait,
 ' Whom he, before the altar of his god,
 ' Shall view in public with one sandal shod.'
 And lo! as by this oracle foretold,
 What time advent'rous Jason, brave and bold,
 Anaurus past high swoln with winter's flood,
 He left one sandal rooted in the mud.

¹ Thus begins Homer's *Batrachomyomachia*; the 17th Idyllium of Theocritus; and the poem of Aratus.

To Pelias thus the hasty prince repair'd,
And the rich banquet at his altar shar'd.

* *

As mourn'd Alcimeda ; her handmaids hear,
Sigh back her sighs, and answer tear with tear.
Then Jason these consoling words address'd,
To soothe the rising anguish of her breast :
' Cease, mother, cease excess of grief to show,
' Oh ! cease this wild extravagance of woe.
' Tears cannot make one dire disaster less,
' They cherish grief and aggravate distress.
' Wisely and justly have the gods assign'd
' Unthought of miseries to all mankind.
' The lot they give you, though perchance severe,
' Confiding in Minerva bravely bear.
' Minerva first this bold adventure¹ mov'd,
' Apollo and the oracles approv'd.
' These calls of heaven our confidence command,
' Join'd with the valour of this princely band.
' Haste, royal mother, to your native tow'rs,
' Pass with your handmaids there the peaceful hours ;
' Forbode not here calamities to come ;
' Your female train will reconduct you home.'
He spoke ; and from the palace bent his way.

* *

When rosy morning beaming bright appear'd,
The neighbouring peasants round, with early day,
Flock to the seer,² their due regards to pay :
This daily custom love and reverence taught ;
And some provision for the sage they brought.
All came to learn by his prophetic lore ;
He to the rich divin'd, and to the poor ;
For numerous votaries he reliev'd from dread,
Who dearly lov'd him, and who daily fed.

¹ The Argonautic expedition for the golden fleece.

² Phineus, son of Agenor.

With these his steady friend Paræbius came,
 Who saw with joy these gallant sons of fame.
 To him prophetic Phineus had foretold
 That a young band of Grecians, brave and bold,
 Should in their voyage to the Colchian shore,
 In Thynia's bay their well-built vessel moor;
 And from these coasts those ravenous birds of prey
 The harpies drive, though sent by Jove away.

* *

Cupid, meantime, through liquid air serene,
 Speeds to the Colchian court, his flight unseen;
 Like that large fly, which breeze the shepherds call,
 That hastes to sting the heifers in the stall.
 The nimble god unseen the porch ascends,
 And there his bow behind a pillar bends;
 A fatal arrow from his quiver took,
 And, quick advancing with insidious look,
 Behind great Æson's son, conceal'd from sight,
 He fits the arrow, fatal in its flight;
 Bends the tough bow with all his strength and art,
 And deep he hides it in Medea's heart.
 A sudden transport seiz'd the melting maid;
 The god, exulting now, no longer stay'd.
 The glowing shaft the virgin's heart inspires,
 And in her bosom kindles amorous fires.
 On Jason beam'd the splendour of her eyes,¹
 Her full breast heav'd with unremitting sighs;
 Thus, kindling quick, love's secret flames invade,
 And torture, as they rise, the troubled maid;
 Her changeful cheeks the heartfelt anguish show,
 Now pale they turn, now like the ruby glow.

* *

With water stor'd, once more the busy train
 Embark, and lash the foamy brine again.

¹ It was through Medea's art in magic that Jason is said to have succeeded in his enterprize.

Assiduous all, with equal ardour glow,
 Distant to leave Salmonis' lofty brow.
 As o'er the Cretan deep the galley flew,
 Around them night her sable mantle threw ;
 Pernicious night, whose all-investing shade
 Nor star, nor Phœbe's brighter rays pervade.
 Thick darkness, or from heaven or hell profound,
 Spread, as it rose, its rueful shades around.
 Uncertain whether on huge billows tost,
 Sublime they sail, or sink to Pluto's coast,
 Uncertain where the bursting wave may throw,
 They to the sea commit their weal or woe.
 Jason aloud, with lifted hands, address'd
 The god of day to succour the distress'd,
 The tears fast trickling down his sorrowing face,
 He vow'd with gifts the Delphic shrine to grace ;
 He vow'd with choicest gifts, an ample store
 To load Amyclæ and Ortygia's shore.
 Attentive to his tears and meek request,
 Phœbus from heaven descends, and stands confess'd,
 Where frowning hideous o'er the deeps below,
 The rocks of Melans lift their shaggy brow.
 Awhile on one of these he takes his stand,
 His golden bow high lifting in his hand ;
 Assisted by whose far-reflected light,
 An isle of small extent attracts their sight,
 Amid the Sporades ; against it stood
 Hippuris, circled by the rolling flood,
 Their anchors here they drop. * *

The success of the expedition is mentioned thus :—

Hail, happy race of heroes, and repay
 With tributary praise my tuneful lay !
 With pleasure still may distant times rehearse,
 And added years on years exalt my verse !
 For here I fix the period of your woes,
 And with your glorious toils my numbers close.

Meleager flourished 100 B.C.

This poet was born at Tyre, and lived in the reign of Seleucus, the last of the Seleucidæ. It is to his well-directed labours that we are indebted for the *Anthologia*, or collection of ancient Greek epigrams, which contains many valuable specimens of the taste and poetical fancy of the Greeks; the best of the modern epigrams may be traced to this source. The mind of Meleager was woven of the finest texture, shaded, but not darkened by melancholy, and easily affected by change of place or season. To his celebrated collection, our author prefixed a poem descriptive of the work, and of the authors by whose contributions it was enriched. This preface is entitled the garland, in which the choicest flowers of the ancient and contemporary poets are wreathed together, and presented to his friend Diocles.

Meleager's Epitaph.

Tyre was my island nurse. An Attic race
 I boast, though Gadara my native place,
 Herself an Athens—Eucrates I claim
 For sire, and Meleager is my name;
 From childhood in the muse was all my pride:
 I sang, and with Menippus, side by side,
 Urg'd my poetic chariot to the goal.
 And why not Syrian? To the free-born soul
 Our country is, *The World*; and all on earth
 One universal chaos brought to birth.
 Now old, and heedful of th' approaching doom,
 These lines, in memory of my parted bloom
 I on my picture trace, as on my tomb.

CHAPTER X.

ON HISTORY.

ITS DEFINITION, AND ESSENTIAL DIFFERENCE FROM
PHYSICAL AND MATHEMATICAL SCIENCES—ITS GR
DIVISIONS, OR ERAS—TRADITION, WRITTEN, AND PRIN
HISTORY—DIFFERENT METHODS OF TREATING IT —
QUISITES NECESSARY TO FORM A GOOD HISTORICAL WRIT
—CELEBRATED HISTORIANS OF GREECE, HERODOTUS, TI
CYDIDES, AND XENOPHON.

The term history appears to have had a different ac-
tation among the ancients, from that which it has obtain-
in modern times; the Greeks, who framed the word, und-
stood by it an inquiry, an examination, and in this sense
is employed by Herodotus. Among the moderns, howev-
history is understood to mean narrative or recital, ev-
when it has little pretension to veracity. The ancients w-
content to search for truth, the moderns believe that th-
possess it; it was doubtless this feeling of uncertainty wh-
induced the former to adopt so modest a term; and impres-
with its propriety, the author will consider history as c-
nected with inquiry, examination, and the study of fa-
History, indeed, is to some extent an actual inquest of fa-
reaching us only through the medium of other persons;
historian therefore, who knows his duty, ought to consi-
himself as standing in the situation of a judge, who calling
fore him the witnesses of a circumstance, interrogates th-
and endeavours to arrive at the truth. Not witnessing
fact himself, it is obvious that he can with difficulty re-
complete certainty, and that he must frequently judge
analogy; hence results the necessity of considering hi-
rical facts under a double relation.

History, considered as a science, differs essentially f-
the physical and mathematical sciences; in physical sci-

the facts are permanent, and are capable of being presented to the spectator, or exhibited to the witness. In history the facts exist no longer, they are gone, and cannot be presented to the view of the spectator, nor confronted with the witness. Physical science addresses itself immediately to the senses, history to the memory and to reflection; the former carries with it evidence and certainty, the latter has two adjuncts of an inferior degree, likelihood and probability: hence originates a difference in the decisions which may be pronounced on the same facts, for every one judges of likelihood and probability according to the nature and extent of his knowledge. Herodotus has here set us an example: speaking of the voyage of a Phœnician vessel, which Necho, king of Egypt, despatched by the Red Sea, and which having sailed round Africa, returned three years afterwards by the Mediterranean,¹ he says, "The Phœnicians related on their return, that in sailing round Lybia they had the sun on their right; this story seemed to me by no means credible, but perhaps it may be believed by others." This circumstance is with us the strongest proof of the fact; and Herodotus, who decided erroneously upon it, is at the same time highly commendable for reporting it without addition or alteration, and for not having exceeded the bounds of his own information. Ancient historians and geographers, who were more presumptuous,² have, upon their imperfect knowledge, decided that the story was false; but their error which is now demonstrated, is a useful warning to avoid pronouncing judgment from the dictates of prejudice, and with imperfect information.

History may be arranged in three grand divisions or eras; firstly, tradition; secondly, written; thirdly, printed history.

Firstly, Tradition. In the transmission of facts by speech or tradition, all the caprices and eccentricities of the human

¹ 604 B. C.

² Strabo for example.

mind are brought into action. It is easy to conceive that circumstances which are transmitted from mouth to mouth, and from generation to generation, will undergo considerable alterations; when we frequently see an individual vary in his account of the same occurrences, according as he experiences the influence of a change of interest, or feelings. Confidence in tradition is therefore usually decried, and becomes more absurd in proportion as it is removed by great intervals of time and place from the original source. It is by tradition, however, that history has commenced in all countries; and on taking a view of it in general, we find that its details are chimerical and extravagant, in proportion as they ascend to periods of remote antiquity, and are connected with the origin of nations; but as history approaches to known times, to ages in which the arts and the moral system have made some progress, it assumes the character of probability and rationality, analagous to what we at present experience. Thus, in comparing the history of states, we arrive at this conclusion, that its representations are inconsistent with nature and reason, in proportion as the condition of nations approaches to that of savages; and on the contrary, that its statements are more analogous to the order with which we are acquainted, in proportion as those nations become enlightened, polished, and civilized.

Secondly, Written History. When a circumstance is transmitted by writing, its state becomes fixed, and it preserves immutably that kind of authority which it derives from the character of the narrator. It may have been previously disfigured, but as it has been committed to paper, so it remains; and if, as it may frequently happen, different minds give to it different interpretations, they are still obliged to recur to that character, which, if not original, is at least positive. Besides, every written document possesses this further advantage, that notwithstanding the intervals of time and space, it transmits facts immediately

as they existed, or as they have been recorded; it brings the individual before us, and at the distance of thousands of years introduces us to a conversation with Homer, Cicero, and other great authors. Nothing more is necessary than to prove that the writing is not doubtful, and is really the work of the person whose name it bears. If the work have been translated, it loses nothing of its authenticity; but in passing from one language to another, the circumstances are removed one degree farther from their origin, and they always receive a colouring, more or less vivid, according to the disposition and ability of the translator; still, however, we have the opportunity of examining the original, and rectifying any mis-statements that may have occurred.

Thirdly, Printed History. Until towards the conclusion of the fifteenth century, all books were in manuscript; it was only in 1440, that John Guttenberg, of immortal memory, made his first essay in the art of printing. He was followed by his associates Fust and Scheffer, who made their original characters in wood, and afterwards in metal, and by this ingenious invention instantaneously obtained an infinite number of repetitions, or copies of the first model. This splendid innovation produced a change in the subject of history, which it is important to remark. When writing was the only means by which books could be produced, the time such a laborious operation required, and the expense it occasioned, rendered copies exceedingly scarce and dear. Works of literature were created with much difficulty, but easily destroyed; one copyist slowly brought forth an individual book, the press in a moment gives rise to a generation. Original copies being few, and confined to the possession of wealthy individuals, or to public libraries, the number of persons who could collect materials for the composition of historical works was necessarily limited; their statements were not so liable to be questioned as those of modern

writers, and they might omit or alter facts with greater impunity. The circle of their readers being confined, their judges were proportionably few; on the contrary, since the discovery of the art of printing, a work once proved to be authentic, may, by the multiplication of copies, be submitted to an extensive examination, and to the critical discussion of an immense number of readers. To misstate circumstances, to vitiate the text of an author, and to avoid detection, are no longer easy; and thus historical certainty has acquired great and real advantages.

It must be allowed, that the number of years which the composition of a book required among the ancients, the long period necessary for its distribution, and before it could become extensively known, afforded an opportunity for divulging bold truths, because time had removed a great number of those who were interested in the narration. This style of publication was certainly favourable to historical veracity, but it also encouraged partiality, and it became less easy to refute errors, as there were few who had the means of investigating them; private circulation being equally in the power of the moderns, while they possess the means of obviating its inconveniences, the advantage appears to be completely on their side. The nature of the above circumstances tended among the ancients to concentrate both the study, and the composition of history, within a very limited circle, consisting of the rich and men in public situations. To be well acquainted with circumstances it was necessary to have been actually engaged in public affairs; indeed the greater part of the Greek and Roman historians were generals, magistrates, and individuals of fortune, or of distinguished rank. Among the oriental nations, priests were almost the only historical writers. Thus we can easily account for the character of dignity and elevation which distinguishes the authors of antiquity, and which was the natural consequence of the cultivated education they had received.

The art of printing has so increased and facilitated the means of reading and composition, that authorship has become in some degree an object of commerce, and modern writers have assumed a mercantile boldness, a rash confidence, which debases history, and profanes the sanctity of its object. It is true that antiquity had likewise its compilers and literary pretenders, but the trouble of copying their works prevented the lumber from descending to succeeding ages, and thus far the difficulty of multiplying books has been serviceable to science. This advantage was, on the other hand, counterbalanced by serious inconveniences; the well-founded suspicion of an almost unavoidable partiality, by a disposition to personality, the ramifications of which, extended in proportion as the writer had been engaged in the transactions he recorded, and influenced in his sentiments by interest or passion; by feelings of family and consanguinity, which in Greece and Italy constituted a spirit of general and indelible faction. A work composed by an individual became the common property of his family, particularly if they espoused the opinions of the writer. Thus, a manuscript of the Fabii, or the Scipios, was transmitted from generation to generation by inheritance; and if there existed in a less powerful family a manuscript which tended to disprove it, they were ever ready to seize it, considering the prize an important victory. Among the moderns however, an attempt to environ with secrecy an historical work is vain, even when supported by the credit of wealth, defended by family, and protected by the power of authority. A short investigation, and slight opposition, are sufficient to raise doubts, and to overthrow an edifice of falsehood, which the labour of years may have been necessary to erect. Such is the signal service the art of printing renders to truth, that an obscure individual, if he have the virtues and talents of an historian, may brave the indignation of nations, while he censures their errors, and condemns their prejudices. Accustomed as we are to the uniform influence of printing, we

are not sufficiently sensible of all the advantages it produces. To estimate the effects of its privation, it is necessary to have lived in a country where the art does not exist; then we should soon see what confusion in accounts, absurdity in reports, uncertainty in opinions, obstacles to information and general ignorance, the want of books create. Such is the power of the press, such its influence on civilization—that is to say, on the development of the faculties of man in the manner most useful to society—that the epoch of its invention divides the moral state of nations, as well as their history, into two distinct and different systems. Its existence so marks the possession of knowledge, that to know whether a people be civilized or barbarous, it is only necessary to ask—Does the art of printing flourish among them?

It appears to the author, that there are four different methods of treating history:—Firstly, the chronological, in which the rule of time is followed. Secondly, the systematic method, founded on the connection of facts. Thirdly, the philosophical analysis of a particular art or science: and Fourthly, the same method applied to a general history, consisting in an exposition of the whole physical and moral condition of a nation.

Firstly, then, the chronological method is a collection and classification of events, according to their dates. The style is that of simple narrative, intermixed with few or no reflections; it is the least complicated, and requires but a small amount of study and talent in the composition. Thus, we find that under the name of *Chronicles* and *Annals*, this kind of history has been the first in every nation. In this modest form, however, it has sometimes risen to a high degree of merit; when authors, such as Tacitus in his *Annals*, and Thucydides in his *Peloponnesian war*, have known how to select interesting facts, and to add to the fidelity of the picture the bold and brilliant colouring of nervous expression. On the other hand, when writers with-

out taste, present their readers with a dry detail of facts; when their labour is reduced to dull insipid narratives of the reigns and deaths of princes, or of battles, plagues, and famines, as is the case with nearly all the historians of ancient and modern Asia, as well as those of the middle ages of Europe; it will be allowed that this sort of composition deserves the contempt which is usually bestowed on books, bearing the title of chronicles. Such compositions are but rude draughts, and form only the first step towards the other kinds of history.

Secondly, the systematic method. It renders all accessory narrations subservient to the main story, connecting and blending the collateral transactions with the principal events. We have an excellent example of this method in the history of Herodotus, the basis of which is the war of the Persians and Greeks. The author has so arranged the incidents, that commencing with the origin of both nations, he traces the gradual rise of the power of each; by a series of incidents skilfully introduced, he makes his readers acquainted with the history of the Lydians, the Medes, the Babylonians subdued by Cyrus, then the Egyptians conquered by Cambyzes, the Scythians attacked by Darius, next the Indians, and in treating their history he takes a general view of the extremities of the world, as known in his time. At last Herodotus returns to his leading subject, and terminates it with the triumph of the little Grecian states over the immense army of Xerxes, when they fought at Thermopylæ and Salamis. In the adoption of this plan, the author disposes of his materials as he pleases; and his success depends upon his art and talent in connecting, suspending, and combining the principal events of the story, so as to produce a correspondence of all the parts with the whole. Such different and varied advantages of freedom in the scheme, boldness in the execution, beauty in the detail, and interest in the result, have given to this method a dra-

matic character, and procured for it the decided preference of a great number of writers in modern times. There is however, one serious fault to be guarded against, that of forming hypotheses from the uncontrolled exercise of the imagination, which renders this kind of history liable to error.

Thirdly, by philosophical analysis. This method consists in tracing any particular subject, art, or science, from its origin, or from a given period, and considering it singly throughout its progress, classifying and arranging the subordinate parts, so as to resolve them into one whole. The present "History of Literature" falls under this head; embracing, as it does, language, writing, poetry, history, philosophy, oratory, &c., it comprehends them under one subject, literature. The talents called into requisition here, are vast and untiring research, with judicious criticism, that many authorities should be consulted, the originals in the first instance, and then the translations; afterwards care and consideration are necessary to arrive at sound conclusions.

Fourthly, the last method of treating history is the same as the former, with respect to the management of the subject, but it differs in being more comprehensive; and instead of discussing a single subject, or science, it embraces history in all its parts: considering nations as individuals, it follows them through the duration of their physical and moral existence, for the purpose of deducing the causes and effects of the progress, the grandeur, and decline of their state or government; it combines not only the biography of a nation, but also the physiological study of its laws, with the growth and decay of its social system. The author is not aware that any history as yet exists, with legitimate claims of being conducted on a principle so comprehensive, profound, and complete. It was certainly from a conviction of such difficulties, that the study of history

was among the ancients confined to men of education, who were destined for public employments. In China, an empire famed for many wise institutions, a special college of historians has existed for ages. The people of that country have not unreasonably supposed, that the business of collecting and transmitting the facts which constitute the remembrance of a nation, ought neither to be abandoned to the hazard, nor the caprice of individuals. It has appeared to them, that the composition of history would form a magistracy, which might exercise a powerful influence on the conduct of governments; they have therefore been desirous that individuals, selected for their knowledge and talents, should be charged with the task of collecting the events of each reign; and that without communicating with each other, they should deposit their notes, or memoranda, in sealed boxes, not to be opened until the decease of the ruling sovereign, or the expiration of his dynasty; a method unquestionably well calculated to insure truth and impartial correctness.

In regard to the requisites necessary to form a good historical writer, various opinions have been offered both in ancient and modern times; the most judicious of which appears to be that of Lucian, who lived in the reign of the Emperor Trajan, A. D. 180; his treatise is divided into criticism and precept. In the former, he ridicules, with that lively wit peculiar to himself, the bad taste of a number of historians, to whom the war of Marcus Aurelius against the Parthians gave birth, and who perished, as he says, like a swarm of butterflies after a storm. Among the faults with which he reproaches them, he particularly notices their amplification of style, affectation of learned words, and superfluity of epithets; by a natural consequence of so corrupt a taste, falling into the opposite extremes of trivial expression, low details, intermixed with daring falsehoods and base flattery. In short, the epide-

mical corruption with which the Roman writers of the second century were attacked, was distinguished by the same symptoms which modern Europe exhibits in frequent examples among every people. In the second part, preface Lucian describes the qualities and duties of a good historian; he would have him endowed with sagacity, capable of thinking justly, and of disclosing his thoughts, free from fear and ambition, inaccessible to the seductions and menaces of power; disposed to declare the truth without diffidence, and without acrimony; just without severity, prepared to censure, but disdaining to calumniate; and neither influenced by a party, nor a national spirit. I would have him a citizen of the world, subject to no master, obeying no law, regardless of the opinions of his own time, and looking only for the esteem of the wise, and the suffrage of posterity. As to the style of history, Lucian recommends that it should be easy, pure, clear, and suited to the subject; habitually simple in narrative, but becoming noble, dignified, and almost poetic, according to the scene it portrays; seldom oratorical, and never declamatory. The reflections ought to be short, the materials well distributed, and the evidence carefully scrutinized. The mirror of the historian, as he observes, should be a faithful mirror, reflecting facts without distorting them. If he state a marvellous occurrence, he should simply describe it, without affirmation or denial, that he may not be responsible for its correctness or falsehood; he ought to have no object but truth, no motive but the desire of being useful, and no recompence in expectation but the approbation of those who are the best judges of his labours. Such is the substance of the excellent treatise of Lucian.¹

¹ The emperor Marcus Aurelius was so charmed with the merits of Lucian, that he appointed him registrar to the Roman government of Egypt, a situation of dignity and emolument.

Herodotus flourished 450 B. C.

This great historian was born at Halicarnassus, a considerable town of Asia Minor, 484 years before the Christian era. He was descended from an illustrious family, originally Dorian, and both his parents were of rank in the state. Soon after Herodotus had reached the age of early manhood, he entered on a course of travelling, and visited the most remarkable parts of the world then known, Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Colchis, the northern parts of Africa, the shores of the Hellespont, the Euxine Sea, Scythia, and it is believed Babylon, and Ecbatana. In these countries he pursued his researches with unwearied industry, convinced that circumstances, which at the first view appear trifling, are frequently a cause of that variety which human nature assumes in different climates; he also devoted much patient attention to the religion, history, morals, and customs of the nations which he visited. On his return to Halicarnassus, he found that his uncle Panyasis had been put to death by the tyrannic ruler Lygdamis; and considering his life not secure in his native city, he withdrew to the neighbouring island of Samos. This voluntary exile gave him leisure to arrange the researches he had made in his travels, and to form the plan of his history. An innate love of liberty, however, combined with a desire to avenge the death of his kinsman, inspired our author with the idea of overthrowing the tyrant, and restoring freedom to his country: there were many of the citizens discontented with the tyranny of Lygdamis, to these the talents and experience of Herodotus gave decision and unanimity; when their plans were ripe for execution, he appeared in his native place at the head of a formidable party, the tyrant was dethroned, and Halicarnassus had an opportunity to become free; but the men of rank and wealth, who had been eager in the overthrow of Lygdamis, seized the government, and established an aristocracy. The people presently discovered that the assumed enthu-

siasm for liberty was but a pretext which had subjected them to a yoke more galling, that instead of one tyrant they were now oppressed by many; and, looking upon Herodotus (whose intentions in the transaction had been honourable) as the author of a change ruinous to themselves, they treated him with such insolence and contumacious behaviour that he bade farewell for ever to his native land.

He proceeded to Olympia, the games were then celebrating, and a generous desire of fame led him to read at an illustrious meeting in the Opisthodomus¹ a portion of his history; it was received with such applause that the names of the nine muses were unanimously given to the nine books into which it is divided. Encouraged by such distinguished approbation, he dedicated the next two years of his life to the improvement of a work destined not only to survive long after his decease, but to remain to future generations an inexhaustible mine of useful knowledge and practical wisdom. He recommenced his travels with renovated ardour, and as he had formerly directed his attention more particularly to the nations and countries which acknowledged the supremacy of the Persian empire, he now travelled with the same patience of investigation over the various provinces of Greece, collecting the records of the most illustrious families of the different towns and any note. Having brought his history to a degree of perfection more satisfactory to his mind, he presented himself before the Athenians at the Panathenæa, a festival celebrated in the summer, and again read some extracts from it; that enlightened people not only applauded the work but also presented him with ten talents from the public treasury. Herodotus was then thirty-nine years of age, and he shortly afterwards quitted Athens with a body of adventurers to found a colony at Thurium, near the anc-

¹ The Opisthodomus was a large hall in the back part of the temple of Olympian Jupiter at Elis.

Sybaris, in the south of Italy. In the band was Lysias, who afterwards became so renowned an orator. The reputation of our historian was now in its zenith; in the new colony he appears to have passed the remainder of his days, making various improvements in his work: the exact period, manner, and place of his death, are uncertain. Some authorities assert that he died at Pella, in Macedonia: Marcellinus, in a passage which occurs in the life of Thucydides, affirms that the tomb of Herodotus was to be seen at Athens, among the monuments of Cimon; on the other hand, Stephen of Byzantium, gives an inscription, said to have been found at Thurium, as follows: "This earth contains Herodotus, son of Lyxes, a Dorian by birth, but the most illustrious of the Ionian historians." He appears, however, to have attained a good old age, not dying till his 77th year.

His history contains the most remarkable occurrences within a period of 240 years, from the reign of Cyrus, the first king of Persia, to that of Xerxes, when the historian was living. The work, as has been already intimated, is divided into nine books, named after the nine muses. The first book, Clio, commences thus, "To rescue from oblivion the memory of former incidents, and to render a just tribute of renown to the many great and wonderful actions, both of Greeks and barbarians, Herodotus of Halicarnassus, produces these historical researches."¹ It then proceeds to develop the causes of hostility between the Greeks and barbarians, treats of the transfer of the kingdom of Lydia from Gyges to Cræsus, the minority of Cyrus, and his subsequent overthrow of the unwieldy Lydian empire; it

¹ The simplicity with which Herodotus begins his history, and enters immediately on his subject, has been much and deservedly admired; it exhibits a striking contrast to the elaborate introductions of modern writers. It is not, however, peculiar to Herodotus, it was a beautiful distinction of almost all the more ancient authors.

also notices the rising greatness of the powerful republic of Athens and Lacedæmon. The second book, Euterpe, gives a copious and excellent account of Egypt, of manners and customs of that country, and a long dissertation on the succession of its kings. The third, Thucydides, contains a detail of the exploits and achievements of Cambyses, particularly of the subjugation of the west of Egypt by that capriciously tyrannical monarch; finally, records the election of Darius Hystaspes to the Persian throne, which had become vacant by the death of Smerdis, the impostor. The fourth, Melpomene, gives a narrative of the unfortunate and calamitous expedition of the Persians, during the reign of Darius Hystaspes, against the Scythians. The fifth, Terpsichore, mentions the republics of Athens, Lacedæmon, and Corinth, in their progress to stability and fame; gives a concise view of their resources and strength, in the time of the Persian sovereign Darius, and concludes with the expulsion of the tyrant Hippias from Athens. The sixth, Erato, records the origin of the Lacedæmonian kings, the causes which induced Darius to declare war against Greece, the first invasion of that country by the Persians, and finishes with the memorable battle of Marathon. The seventh, Polyhymnia, contains a narrative of the formidable expedition of Xerxes, the son of Darius Hystaspes, against Greece, and concludes with an animated account of the battle between the Greeks and Persians, at the straits of Thermopylæ. The eighth, Urania, relates the further progress of the arms of Xerxes, the taking and burning of Athens by the Persians, with the event which took place at the naval battle of Salamis, which eventually led to the overthrow of the Persian power in Greece. The ninth, Calliope, treats of the battle of Platea, the flight of the Persian army from the promontory of Mycale, and the subsequent retreat of the Persians in consequence of these engagements.

To Herodotus we are indebted for what we know of

ancient dynasties of the Medes, Persians, Phœnicians, Lydians, Greeks, Egyptians, and Scythians. His ultimate object, however, is to commemorate the glorious struggle between the Greeks and Persians; in which the former successfully defended their liberties against the vast multitudes, brought into the field from all parts of the world by the latter, whose dominion extended over the whole of Asia and Africa then known, and some parts of Europe. The account of the immediate causes of the war, and of the events which ensued after its breaking out, commences at the fifth book, and is continued to the end of the work; occasionally interrupted by digressions, or rather episodes, introduced with consummate skill. The most important circumstances may be summed up very shortly: the Ionians having ensured the assistance of the Athenians, revolt from the Persian empire; the Athenians send a few ships to the succour of the former, who were their descendants; they obtain possession of Sardis, and set its buildings on fire. Darius, king of Persia, informed of the share the Athenians had in the capture and destruction of Sardis, vows that he will take vengeance on them; he begins by reducing the Ionians once more to subjection, and then despatches a formidable army against Athens, but the Persians are beaten at Marathon. Exasperated at the tidings of this defeat, Darius makes still greater preparations; his vengeance, however, is suspended for a time by the rebellion of Egypt, one of his provinces, and finally arrested by death. Xerxes, his son and successor, prompted by ambition and imprudent counsels, instead of confining his designs to the punishment of Athens, resolves to subdue the whole of Greece, and determines to march in person against that country. He raises the most numerous army ever heard of, he mans a considerable fleet, and establishes for this immense multitude, magazines of corn and provisions on the frontiers of Greece; and after two years of incessant preparations, commences his march in the spring of the third. He first re-

ceives a check at Thermopylæ, and his fleet being afterwards defeated at Salamis, he returns to Asia covered with disgrace. His chief general, Mardonius, is left in Europe with the ablest part of the forces; in the following year he is conquered, and falls at Platea; and by a singular coincidence on the very day of that battle another is fought, by the forces on board the Grecian fleet, against a Persian army stationed at Mycale, in Caria of Asia Minor, and here also the Greeks obtain a signal victory; these latter events conclude the history. But Herodotus, whose genius for expatiating eminently qualified him for the investigation of causes while his character inclined him to devote his talents to the service of his fellow men, saw that if he confined his history within such narrow limits, the Greeks would form but an imperfect idea of the difficulties with which their ancestors had to contend. It was necessary to show them that the heroes of Marathon, Thermopylæ, Salamis, Platea, and Mycale, had conquered the conquerors of the world, and it became indispensable to present to their view the history of the Persians. Hence an account of this remarkable and highly civilized people, forms the connecting chain throughout the whole of the nine books; to the various links of which, Herodotus with surprising art, attaches the histories of the other barbarians, the manners and customs of foreign nations, the wonders of distant lands, with the antiquities and early traditions of the Greeks themselves.

It is certainly interesting, and may not be unimportant to consider the principles of moral and religious philosophy which pervade the history of Herodotus. They are submitted to the reader in an early part of his work, and represented as proceeding from the mouth of Solon, in his conversation with Croesus, king of Lydia: they are,—“That power and riches are not sufficient to constitute happiness; for the man in possession of a moderate fortune, is often more happy than the sovereign on his throne—that every

thing is subject to the law of destiny—that the divinity is jealous of the pride and vanity of men, and loves to abash those who raise themselves too high; consequently no man can be said to have been truly fortunate, until he end his life in a state of happiness.” There are two other maxims repeatedly illustrated in the course of his work—“That the divinity visits great crimes with punishment in this world; and is wont to interfere directly in human affairs.” The private character of Herodotus was amiable and excellent. In his political one, he was a moderate, although sincere republican; allowing the doctrine, however, that every nation knew best what government was fittest for itself.

Herodotus is styled by Cicero the father of history, not only because he is the most ancient author, whose writings of that kind have been handed down to posterity, but also in regard to his great and superior excellence. Dionysius, of Halicarnassus, an able judge, assigns to him the same station among historians, as to Homer among epic poets, to Sophocles among tragedians, and to Demosthenes among orators; that of the highest rank. His style is pure, elegant, and copious: his veracity is to be depended upon in all matters which fell under his own observation; he is at the same time inclined to admit too easily the reports of others, and to lean towards the marvellous. On Grecian affairs he displays much learning, and an ardent love for his country. As he read his work to a large assembly whom he wished to please, it is not improbable that he was attentive to suppress what might be disagreeable to their feelings. Taking a candid and liberal view of his work, however, his memory is justly entitled to a high degree of admiration and respect. Herodotus wrote another history of Assyria and Arabia, which is lost. The life of Homer has been ascribed to him; but it is evident from the style of it, that such an opinion is not correct; and besides, of all the ancient authors who have written the fortunes or poems of Homer,

not one has mentioned such a work as bearing the name of this historian.

Thucydides flourished 437 B. C.

This historian was born 471 years before the Christian era: he was descended from a noble family, and related to the great Miltiades; his education was carefully attended, and according to Marcellinus he studied philosophy under Anaxagoras. It appears that his father carried him to the Olympic games, in the fifteenth year of his age, and he was present when Herodotus read his history to an illustrious assembly; filled with a noble ambition he burst into tears, "Olorus," said the father of history to his paragon, "thy son burns with the desire of knowledge." At the age of seventeen he entered the army, and at forty-seven he was in command of an Athenian fleet of seven ships, which he sent off Thasos, was given to him. But having been too late (neither through negligence nor cowardice) in preventing Brasidas, the Lacedæmonian general, obtaining possession of Amphipolis, which belonged to Athens; although he saved Eion, very near the former, at the mouth of the Strymon, he was, through the influence of Cleon, condemned to twenty years banishment, 423 B. C. Thucydides was then forty-eight years old, and at leisure, his private fortune being ample, to attend to the great object of his ambition, that of writing the history of the Peloponnesian war. "Exile," according to Plutarch, "was a blessing which the muses bestowed upon their favourites, enabling them to complete their most beautiful and noble compositions." He then quotes our author for the first proof of his observation; "Thucydides, the Athenian, compiled his history of the Peloponnesian war at Scaptesyle, in Thrace, where he fixed his residence." A general amnesty was passed, 404 B. C., of which our author seems to have availed himself; he lived twelve years afterwards, and died 391 B. C., being then about eighty years old.

The first twenty-one years of the Peloponnesian war

from 431 to 410 B. C. form the subject of the history of Thucydides, composed in eight books, and the first is a kind of introduction to the others. It commences thus—“Thucydides, an Athenian, hath compiled the history of the war between the Peloponnesians and the Athenians, as managed by each of the contending parties. He began to write upon its first breaking out, from an expectation that it would prove important, and the most deserving regard of any that had ever happened. He grounded his conjecture on the earnestness of both the flourishing parties to make the necessary preparations for it; and he saw that all the rest of Greece was engaged on one side, or the other; some joining immediately, and others intending soon to do so. For this was the greatest commotion that ever happened amongst the Grecians, since in it some barbarians, and it may be said the greater part of mankind were concerned. The actions of an earlier date, and those still more ancient, cannot possibly, through length of time, be adequately known; yet from the information which a search into the most remote times has afforded me, I cannot think they were of any great importance, either in regard to the wars themselves, or any other considerations. It is certain that the region now known by the name of Greece, was not formerly possessed by any fixed inhabitants.” On the ignorance and credulity of men, he says, “For it is the custom of mankind, nay, even when their own country is concerned, to acquiesce with ready credulity in the traditions of former ages, without subjecting them to the test of sedate examination.” Thucydides then proceeds to investigate the causes which led to the war, the real one being the jealousy which the Peloponnesians entertained of the power of Athens, and interrupts his narrative to give an account of the rise and progress of the Athenian state. He resumes his history with the negotiations of the confederacy previous to the declaration of war, and concludes the first book with the oration of Pericles, which induced the Athe-

nians to refuse compliance with the demands of the host parties. The speeches which he introduces in his work are not mere inventions of his own, but contain the general sense of what was actually said, although the style and arrangement are undoubtedly his. An objection has been made to the chronological manner in which Thucydides has arranged his work, into summers and winters; but it ought not to be forgotten, that at the period he wrote, no settlements had come into use, not even the famous one of the Olympiads. The several states of Greece computed time by a method of their own, and it was not easy to make these methods coincide with one another. The Athenians reckoned by their annual Archons, the Lacedæmonians by their Ephori, the Argives by the years of the priestess Juno, &c. The work of our author comes under the denomination of annals, and it must be admitted, that a specimen of this style of writing has probably never been composed with more majesty and spirit.

This great historian claims for himself the merit of the strictest accuracy, to which he is justly entitled. His knowledge of human character was profound; he penetrated into the motives and policy of the leading actors in the war with much ease, and he draws from the events which he relates lessons of political wisdom, which have made his work a favourite study with intelligent and thoughtful individuals of all countries. He wrote in the Attic dialect and his style is a contrast to the full and flowing periods of Herodotus; it possesses a sententious brevity, but is energetic and lively. He has a moral elevation in his method of treating a subject, hardly to be found in any other writer with the exception of Tacitus.

At his death he left his work unfinished; the eighth and last book breaks off abruptly. The whole history is said to have fallen into the hands of Xenophon, who at the death of Thucydides was an exile from Athens, and to Xenophon

is ascribed the honour of having made it public; he continued the history, and wrote the events of the remaining six years of the Peloponnesian war.¹

Xenophon flourished 415 B. C.

This great man, illustrious as a philosopher, an historian, and a general, was born at Athens, about 450 B. C. Eager for military glory, he joined Cyrus the younger, and accompanied him in his culpable and unfortunate expedition against his brother Artaxerxes, king of Persia; after the decisive battle in the plains of Cunaxa, and the fall of Cyrus, Xenophon conducted that astonishing retreat of the *Ten thousand*, from Babylon to the Euxine, which has been the subject of so much admiration in all succeeding ages, from its having been accomplished in defiance of every obstacle which famine, the vast distance, and a victorious army could throw in his way, during a period of fifteen months. Shortly after his return to Greece, he followed the fortunes of Agesilaus, enjoyed his confidence, fought under his standard, and conquered with him in the provinces of Asia, and at the battle of Coronæ. As usual he had the misfortune to be banished, the low demagogues who so frequently ruled the Athenian republic, having apparently introduced a mania among that fickle people, for either banishing or putting to death their most excellent citizens. He retired to Scillus, a small town in the neighbourhood of Olympia, and having acquired wealth in his Asiatic expeditions, he dedicated the latter years of his life to the writing of history, and other literary compositions. Owing to war breaking out between Elis and Lacedæmon, he was obliged to leave his retreat, and retire to Corinth, where he died in the 90th year of his age, about 360 B. C.

¹ Theopompus, of Chios, the pupil of Isocrates, is said also to have continued the history of the Peloponnesian war; all his compositions are lost, however, excepting a few fragments. He was born about 380, and died 307 B. C.

The remaining six years of the Peloponnesian war written by Xenophon, in continuation of the history of Thucydides, till the naval power of the Athenians was destroyed, and the city of Athens itself surrendered to her foe, which is properly the end of the war of that name, 403 B. C. But the state of Lacedæmon elated with the consequent enlargement of her power, exerted it in too haughty and imperious a manner, the resentment of the other Greek states was raised, a new war ensued, in which Sparta, Lacedæmon, was nearly ruined, and the sovereignty of Greece was transferred to Thebes. The battle of Mantinea, which was fought 363 B. C., and in which the Thebans by losing Epaminondas, their able general, equally celebrated for his private virtues and military talents, may be said to have lost their all, closed this struggle for supremacy, and left the several states to become a common prey to Philip, of Macedon, who soon afterwards began to act. The history of Greece by our historian, ends with the account of that famous battle, including a period of forty-seven years and a half. Xenophon closes the account of the surrender of Athens, his native city, thus—"When Theramenes and the other ambassadors were arrived at Salamis, and were asked, 'What instructions they had?' The answer was—'they had full powers to make a peace.' Upon this the Ephori called them to an audience, and on their arrival they summoned an assembly, in which the Corinthians and Thebans distinguished themselves above the others, though several joined in their sentiments. They argued that 'the Athenians ought to have no peace, but should be utterly destroyed.' The Lacedæmonians declared they would never enslave a Grecian city that had done such valuable service to Greece in the most perilous time. Accordingly they granted peace on condition 'that the Athenians should demolish the long walls and the Piræus, deliver up all their ships except twelve, recall their exiles, should have the same friends and the same foes with the Lacedæmonians.'

nians, and follow them at command either by land or sea.' Theramenes and his colleagues returned to Athens with these conditions. At their entering the city, a crowd of people flocked about them, fearing they had been dismissed without any thing being done; for their present situation would admit of no delay, such numbers were perishing by famine. On the following day the ambassadors reported the terms on which the Lacedæmonians offered to make peace. Theramenes assured them, 'they had no recourse left, but to obey, and demolish the walls;' some spoke against, but a large majority being favourable, it was resolved 'to accept the peace.' In pursuance of this, Lysander stood into the Piræus, and the exiles returned into the city. They demolished the walls with alacrity, music playing all the time, since they judged this to be the first day that Greece was free."

Other works of Xenophon are, his *Anabasis*, an authentic and interesting narrative of the expedition of Cyrus, in which he partook, although he appears rather complimentary to the virtues of that prince. His *Cyropædia*, or the history of the elder Cyrus, in eight books, according to the opinions of Plato and Cicero, a moral romance, and not so much what Cyrus had been, as what every good and virtuous prince ought to be. He has also left two excellent political tracts on the constitutions of Athens and Lacedæmon, with some smaller works of inferior note. He was a disciple of Socrates, and a fellow pupil with Plato; his attachment to his master was most amiable and exemplary; he vindicated his fame, defended him in an affecting and beautiful apology, and transmitted his sentiments and discourses to posterity, under the name of memoirs, with a happy and impressive effect. It is difficult to find a more illustrious and accomplished hero among the ancient Greeks than Xenophon; instructed and formed by Socrates, he exemplified his valuable philosophy in the conduct of a

long life. It is not easy to decide which are the most excellent in their kind, his historical, or his philosophic works; a fine strain of moral feeling pervades all his writings. His style is remarkable for simplicity, elegance, and vigour; it was extremely popular, and to combine these three important qualifications is the nearest approach to perfection in any author.¹

CHAPTER XI.

THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF PHILOSOPHY IN GREECE—THE IONIC SECT FOUNDED BY THALES, AND IMPROVED BY ANAXAGORAS—THE ITALIAN BY PYTHAGORAS—THE ELEATIC BY XENOPHANES—THEIR DOCTRINES, AND DISCIPLES.

The increasing taste for poetical composition which took place in Greece after the time of Homer and Hesiod, gave rise to a class of men termed Rhapsodists, whose employment it was to recite at the games and festivals the works of the older poets, to comment on their merits, and explain their principles; some of these founding schools of rhetoric and instruction, were dignified by their pupils with the name of Sophists, or teachers of wisdom. The ascendancy of imagination over reason in the Grecian intellect, is discernible in philosophy, particularly when it considers the operation of the mind. In fabulous times severity of judgment is scarcely to be expected, and it would be useless to examine the tenets of Linus, Orpheus, or others who preceded the age of Solon, which was that of the seven sages, and in which the moral, social, and poetical condition of the Greeks had become changed. The foundation of philosophy in Greece was laid by Thales, and he became the leader of the most ancient sect, called the Ionic.

¹ A narrative of the other historians of Greece, not included in the first or Grecian age of learning, will be given in a subsequent chapter.

Thales flourished 610 B. C.

The most ancient school of philosophy in Greece, the Ionic, was founded by this great man, who was born at Miletus, one of the chief cities of Ionia, in the first year of the 35th Olympiad, 640 B. C. He was descended from Phœnician parents, and the wealth which he inherited, with his superior abilities, raised him to distinction among his countrymen. He travelled to Crete, and afterwards to Egypt, in search of knowledge; returning to Miletus, with a high degree of reputation for wisdom and learning, Thales became an individual of general attention among his countrymen, and his acquaintance was solicited by all who were desirous of acquiring information, or ambitious of being ranked as philosophers. Although he taught his system of philosophy as a science, his engagements did not prevent him from prosecuting his mathematical, astronomical, and metaphysical studies; it is true that his attainments may be thought inconsiderable when compared with those of later times; it should however, be remembered, that the first truths in science are the most important, it being comparatively easy to follow when the way is pointed out, and that great praise is deservedly due to those who discovered them. With so much ardour did our philosopher devote himself to study, that in order to become free from every avocation he gave up the care of his affairs to his nephew, and chose to continue in a state of celibacy, that he might avoid parental anxieties. He lived to the age of ninety, and died of infirmity, whilst he was attending the Olympic games.

We are unable to speak with absolute certainty of the opinions held by Thales; neither this philosopher nor any of his successors in the first Ionic school, have left written records of their doctrines; we are therefore obliged to depend upon the information of later philosophers. Our best authorities are Plato and Aristotle, but the former distorted the systems of his predecessors to assimilate them with his

own, and it is believed that the latter gave an imperfect and obscure account of ancient opinions that his doctrine might appear more valuable. The narratives given of this school by Laertius, Plutarch, and other later writers were at so great a distance of time, that they cannot be considered as deserving of implicit credit. From careful research the following account may be considered nearly correct.—Thales, and his disciples, attentively studied the formation of the universe, the nature of things, and physics in general; the former held, that the first principle of natural bodies, or the simple substance from which all things in this world are formed, is water; he considered that all animals and plants are produced and supported by moisture. He supposed that the passive principle in nature admitted an intelligent and efficient cause. He taught the belief of an over-ruling providence, that God is the most ancient Being, who has neither beginning nor end, that all things are full of him, and that he animates the universe as the soul does the body. A principle of motion wherever it exists, is according to him, mind; hence he believed that the magnet and amber are endued with a soul, which is the cause of their attracting powers. The moral doctrines of his school were pure and rational, of which the following are specimens—‘Neither the crimes, nor the thoughts of men, are concealed from the gods.—Health of body, competent fortune, and a cultivated mind, are the chief sources of happiness.—Parents may expect from their children that obedience which they themselves paid to the parents.—Take more pains to correct the blemishes of the mind, than those of the face.—Stop the mouth of slander by prudence.—Be careful not to do that yourself which you blame in another.’ His own motto was—‘Know thyself.’ Regarding the material world, Thales taught that night existed before day, a doctrine of the Greek theogony which placed night, or chaos, among the divinities. He held that the stars are fiery bodies, the moon an opaque

substance illuminated by the sun, and the earth a spherical body placed in the centre of the universe. In mathematics he is said to have invented several fundamental propositions, afterwards incorporated into the elements of Euclid, particularly the following theorems: that a circle is bisected by its diameter; that the angles at the base of an isosceles triangle are equal; that the vertical angles of two intersecting lines are equal; that if two angles and one side of one triangle, be equal to two angles and one side of another triangle, the remaining angles and sides are respectively equal; and that the angle in a semicircle is a right angle. Of his acquaintance with the principles of mensuration, and consequently of the doctrine of proportion, the method by which he measured the height of the pyramids is a sufficient proof; it was done thus—at the termination of the shadow of the pyramid he erected a staff, perpendicular to the surface of the earth, and thus obtained two right angled triangles, which enabled him to infer the ratio of the height of the pyramid to the length of its shadow, from the ratio of the height of the staff to the length of its shadow.

Considerable improvements in astronomical as well as in mathematical science, appear to have been imparted by Thales to the Greeks; he was so well acquainted with the celestial motions, a branch of knowledge which he seems to have acquired in Egypt, that he greatly astonished them by predicting an eclipse, although probably with no very near approach to accuracy in respect to time; for Herodotus, who relates the fact, says, that he foretold the year it would happen, and all subsequent commentators disagree about the precise period when it occurred. He taught his countrymen the division of the heavens into five zones, the solstitial and equinoctial points, and approached so near to the knowledge of the true length of the solar revolution, that he corrected their calendar, and made their year contain 365 days. Thus, the above particulars respecting the

scientific improvements introduced by Thales, give us an unfavourable idea of the abilities and attainments of the father of Grecian philosophy.

The sciences which Thales had commenced were successfully cultivated by his disciple Anaximander, who was born in the third year of the 42nd Olympiad, 610 B. C.; and Cicero calls him the friend and companion of Thales, probable that he was a native of Miletus. This philosopher was the first who laid aside the defective method of oral tradition, and committed the principles of natural science to writing: he lived to the age of sixty-four. The doctrine of Anaximander concerning nature, and the origin of things, was that infinity, *το απειρον*, is the first principle of all; that the universe though variable in its parts, as one whole is immutable, that all things are produced from infinity, and terminate in it. What this philosopher meant by infinity, however, has been the subject of much controversy, and ingenious conjecture, but has not been decided. Mathematics and astronomy were indebted to him; he framed a connected series of geometrical truths, and wrote a summary of his doctrine. He was the first who undertook to delineate the surface of the earth, and mark the divisions of land and water upon an artificial globe. The invention of the sundial is ascribed to him; but it is not likely that mankind had remained till his time unacquainted with so useful an instrument, considering how much attention had been paid to astronomy in other countries, and how early we read of the division of time into hours. Herodotus, with great probability, ascribes this invention to the Babylonians. He probably made use of a gnomon in ascertaining more correctly than Thales had done, the meridian line, and the points of the solstices. Other opinions ascribed to Anaximander are, that the stars are globular collections of air and fire, borne about in the spheres in which they are placed, inhabited and animated by portions of the divinity; that

the sun has the highest place in the heavens, the moon the next, the planets and fixed stars the lowest; that the earth is a fixed globe, placed in the middle of the universe, and that the sun is twenty-eight times larger than the earth.

Anaximenes, also a native of Miletus, was born in the second year of the 56th Olympiad, 555 B. C. He was a pupil, and afterwards a companion of Anaximander; he followed the footsteps of his master, not however without attempting to throw new light upon the system. He taught that the first principle of all things is air, which he considered to be infinite, or immense; he held it indeed to be the divinity, because it is diffused through all nature, and is perpetually active. The air of this philosopher is then a subtle ether animated with a divine principle, whence it becomes the origin of all beings. He supposed that the sun and moon are fiery bodies, whose form is that of a circular plate; that the stars, which are also similar substances, are fixed in the heavens as nails in a chrystalline plane; and that the earth is a tablet resting upon air.

Anaxagoras, of Clazomene, born in the first year of the 70th Olympiad, 500 B. C., was a disciple of Anaximenes. He inherited from his parents a patrimony sufficient to secure him independence and distinction at home; but such was his thirst after knowledge, that he left his country in the twentieth year of his age, without taking proper precautions concerning his estate, and went to reside at Athens. Here he applied himself to the study of eloquence and poetry, and became particularly conversant with the works of Homer, whom he admired as the best preceptor, not only in writing but in morals. Engaging afterwards in speculations concerning nature, the fame of the Milesian school induced him to leave Athens, that he might attend the public instructions of Anaximenes; under him he became acquainted with his doctrines, and those of his predecessors. Visiting his native city, he found that whilst he had been

busy in the pursuit of knowledge, his estate had been wasted, which drew from him the remark, "that to him he owed his prosperity." After remaining some years at Miletus, he returned to Athens, and there taught philosophy, and had the pleasure of ranking among his contemporaries Euripides, Pericles, Socrates, and Themistocles.

The high reputation which Anaxagoras had acquired in length excited the jealousy and envy of his contemporaries and led to a cruel persecution. He was thrown into prison and condemned to death; from which he was saved with difficulty through the interference of Pericles, who obtained from his judges a remission to the milder sentence of banishment. It appears that his real offence was, the propagation of new opinions concerning the gods, and particularly teaching that the sun is an inanimate fiery body, and consequently not a proper object of worship. There can be little doubt that as this philosopher was indefatigable in his researches into nature, he ventured on many occasions to contradict the vulgar opinions and superstitions. He related that he ridiculed the Athenian priests for predicting an unfortunate event, from the unusual appearance of a bull with one horn, and to convince the people that there was nothing in the affair which was not perfectly natural, he opened the head of the animal, and showed them that it was so constructed, as necessarily to prevent the growth of the other horn. Such freedoms did not suit the understanding of his countrymen, being too far in advance of his age, and were probably the cause of his being exiled. He retired to Lampsacus, where he passed the remainder of his life in instructing youth. He obtained great respect and influence among the magistrates and citizens, and became wealthy. Through his whole life he appears to have supported the character of a true philosopher—superior to motives of ambition and avarice, he devoted himself to the pursuit of science, and under severe vicissitudes of fortune, preserved

an equal mind. When one of his friends expressed regret on account of his banishment from Athens, he replied with equal truth and dignity, "It is not I who have lost the Athenians, but the Athenians who have lost me." Being asked shortly before his death, whether he wished to be carried for interment to Clazomene, his native city, he said, "It is unnecessary, the way to the other world is every where alike open." And in reply to a message sent to him by the senate of Lampsacus, requesting him to inform them in what manner they might most acceptably express their respect for his memory, after his decease? he answered, "By ordaining that the day of my death be annually kept as a holiday in all the schools of Lampsacus." His request was complied with, and the custom remained in force for many centuries. He died about seventy-two years of age. The inhabitants of Lampsacus expressed their high opinion of his wisdom, by erecting a tomb on which they inscribed this epitaph—

*Ενθαδε πλειρον αληθειας επι τερμα περησας
Ουρανιου κοσμου κειται 'Αναξαγορας.*

"This tomb great Anaxagoras confines,
Whose mind explored the paths of heavenly truth."

We are told that two altars were also raised in honour of his memory, and of the doctrines which he taught; one dedicated to Truth, and the other to Mind.

The material world was supposed by Anaxagoras to have originated from a confused mass, consisting of different kinds of particles. Having learned in the Ionic school, that bodies are composed of minute parts, and observing in different bodies different, and frequently contrary forms and qualities, he concluded that the primary particles of which substances consist are of different kinds, and that the peculiar form and properties of each depend upon the nature of that class of particles of which it is chiefly composed. A bone for instance, he conceived to be composed of a great

number of bony particles, a piece of gold of golden particles; and thus he supposed bodies of every kind to be generated from similar particles, and to assume the character of those particles. This system is exhibited in the language of Lucretius—

Principium rerum quam dicit Homæomeriam ;
Ossa videlicet è pauxillis atque minutis .
Ossibus ; sic et de pauxillis atque minutis
Visceribus viscus gigni ; &c.

“ With Anaxagoras, great nature’s law
Is similarity ; and every compound form
Consists in parts minute, each like the whole ;
And bone is made of bone, and flesh of flesh ;
And blood, and fire, and earth, and massy gold,
Are in their smallest portions, still the same.”

The invention of this system is a proof of the author’s ingenuity, who appears to have adopted the notion of similar particles, in the hope of obviating the objections which were against the doctrine of atoms, as he had heard it from Anaximenes.

The most important improvement however, which Anaxagoras made upon the doctrines of his predecessors, was that of separating in his system the active principle in nature, from the material substance upon which it acts, thus introducing a distinct intelligent cause of all things. The similar particles of nature, which he supposed to be the basis of nature, being without life or motion, he concluded that there must have been from eternity an intelligent principle, or infinite mind, existing separately from matter, and having a power of motion within itself, first communicating motion to the material mass, and by uniting homogeneous particles, produced the various forms of nature. That this profound philosopher maintained an infinite mind to be the author of all motion and life, is attested by many ancient authorities, among which are Plato, Aristotle, and Plutarch.

the latter particularly points out wherein he differed from his predecessors. "The Ionic philosophers who appeared before Anaxagoras, made fortune, or blind necessity, that is, the fortuitous or necessary motion of the particles of matter, the first principle of nature; but Anaxagoras affirmed that a pure mind, perfectly free from all material concretions, governs the universe." It clearly appears that this philosopher was the first among the Greeks, who believed mind to exist detached from matter, and acting upon it with intelligence and design in the formation of the world. The infinite mind, or deity, which his predecessors had confounded with matter, making them one universe, Anaxagoras conceived to have a separate and independent existence, and to be pure intelligence, capable of forming the mass of matter according to his pleasure.

Other doctrines are ascribed to this philosopher which, if correctly stated, indicate no inconsiderable knowledge of nature, such as, that the wind is produced by the rarefaction of the air; that the rainbow is the effect of the reflection of the solar rays from a cloud, placed opposite to the sun; that the moon is an opaque body enlightened by the sun, and a habitable region, divided into hills, vales, and waters; that the comets are wandering stars; and that the fixed stars are in a region exterior to that of the sun and moon.

Diogenes Apolloniates, a disciple of Anaximenes, succeeded Anaxagoras; following the steps of his master, he devoted himself to the contemplation of nature; mingling with the severer pursuits of philosophy, the study of eloquence, which qualified him to execute the office of preceptor with reputation both at Miletus and Athens. This success, however, or more probably his opinions, excited so much aversion among the Athenians, that he was obliged to seek safety in flight. What afterwards became of him, with the exact periods of his birth and decease are unknown. He taught that air, or a subtle ether, is the first material

principle in nature; but that it partakes of a divine intelligence, without which nothing can be produced; and all things are formed from this compound principle.

Archelaus, of Miletus, was a disciple of Anaxagoras, taught publicly at Athens his doctrines concerning nature; whence he was called the natural philosopher. Among the tenets ascribed to him are, that the two principle things are air and infinity; that the universe is unlimited; that heat is the cause of motion, and cold of rest; that earth was at the beginning a semi-fluid mass, from which living animals were produced and nourished; and that animals have souls, which differ in their powers, according to the structure of the bodies in which they reside. It remains uncertain, whether with Anaxagoras, he admitted a distinct and independent Deity, the author of nature; whether, with the former philosophers, he supposed one compound principle, consisting of matter, animated by a divine spirit. Regarding morals, he is said to have taught, that the distinction between right and wrong is not founded on nature, but in arbitrary law; a doctrine, which if it was his, obtained little attention or credit at the time, and was not afterwards resumed, till scepticism at a much later period raised a standard inconsistent with common sense. The reputation which Archelaus acquired, procured him many pupils of distinction, amongst whom is commonly reckoned Socrates. Under this great man philosophy assumed a new character, so that Archelaus may be considered with propriety as the last preceptor in the original Ionic school.

Pythagoras flourished 546 B.C.

Soon after the Ionic school, arose the Italian sect, founded by Pythagoras, who was born about the third year of the 48th Olympiad;¹ the precise time of his birth, however, not known; for after much controversy both among ancient

¹ About 586 B.C.

and modern authors, it appears that he was not born earlier than the fourth year of the 43rd Olympiad, nor later than the fourth year of the 52nd. He was a native of the island of Samos, and was first instructed there by Creophilus, and afterwards went to Scyros, to study under Pherecydes; like Thales he visited Egypt, and was initiated into the mysteries of the priesthood of that country. Pythagoras was introduced to Amasis, king of Egypt, a kind patron of learned men, by an introduction from Polycrates, the tyrant of Samos, in order that he might the more easily obtain access to the colleges of the priests. The king could scarcely, with all his authority, prevail on them to admit a stranger to the knowledge of their sacred mysteries. The college of Heliopolis, to whom the instructions of the monarch were sent, referred Pythagoras to the college of Memphis, as of greater antiquity; from Memphis he was dismissed under the same pretence to Thebes. The Theban priests fearing to reject the royal mandate, yet loth to comply with it, prescribed to our philosopher many severe and troublesome preliminary ceremonies, hoping to discourage him from prosecuting his design; but by patience and perseverance he at length obtained their confidence, and was instructed in their doctrines. He passed twenty-two years in Egypt, and became master not only of their different modes of writing, but also of their learning in its whole extent. It is asserted that Pythagoras afterwards visited Persia, Assyria, and Babylon; but on investigating the subject, it appears that this idea is not only destitute of truth, but even of probability. He returned to his native island after an absence of more than twenty years, and desirous that his fellow-citizens should reap the benefit of his studies, he attempted to institute a school for their instruction in the elements of science; he chose to adopt the Egyptian method of teaching, and to communicate his doctrines under a symbolical form; the Samians were either too indolent, or too stupid, to profit by his instructions: the

number of his followers was so inconsiderable, that he obliged for a time to abandon his design. He then sailed to Delos, and after presenting an offering of cake to Apollo, there received, or pretended to receive moral maxims from the priestess, which he in later times delivered to his disciples, under the character of divine precepts. He then proceeded to the island of Crete, Sparta, Elis, and the Olympic games, and before quitting Greece, he assumed the appellation of philosopher.

Furnished with fresh stores of learning, and a kind of authority which he considered more likely to procure respect, Pythagoras returned to Samos, and made a second and more successful attempt to institute among his countrymen a school of philosophy. The place which he selected for this purpose, was a semi-circular building, in which the Samians had been accustomed to meet for public business; here he employed himself in delivering, with an air of great authority, popular precepts of morality, which might contribute to the general benefit of the people. Besides this, he provided himself with a secret cave into which he retired with his most intimate friends, and professed disciples, and gave them instructions in the more abstruse parts of philosophy. What he had been unable to effect by the force of learning and ability, he soon accomplished by concealing his doctrines under the veil of mysterious symbols, and issuing forth his precepts as responses from a divine oracle. Having for some time successfully pursued his plan of instruction at Samos, he became unpopular, and incurred the displeasure of Polycrates; he therefore left that island, passing over to Italy, founded his school among the colonies of Magna Græcia, about 544 B. C.

The first place at which Pythagoras landed was Croton, a city in the bay of Tarentum, whose inhabitants at that time were exceedingly corrupt in their manners; in order to obtain credit with the populace, he pretended to

power of working miracles, and practised many acts of imposture, which procured him such respect and influence, that people of all classes assembled to hear his discourses. The effect however was beneficial, a change being produced in the manners of the citizens; from luxury and licentiousness, they were converted to sobriety and frugality. It is stated, that in Crotona there were not less than six hundred (some say two thousand) who were prevailed upon to submit to the strict discipline which he required, and to throw their effects into a common stock for the benefit of the whole fraternity. Our philosopher did not confine his doctrines to Crotona; he taught in many other cities of Magna Græcia with so much effect, that he established an extensive interest through the country, and obtained from his followers a degree of respect little short of adoration. Unfortunately for Pythagoras, he did not content himself with issuing oracular precepts of wisdom, and instructing his pupils in the speculative doctrines of philosophy, otherwise he might have continued his labours without molestation to the end of his life. Having obtained great influence over the people, not only at Crotona, but at Rhegium Agrigentum, Metapontum, and other places, he employed it in urging them to a strenuous assertion of their rights, against the encroachments of their tyrannical governors. The attempts made in consequence, excited a spirit of jealousy, and raised a powerful opposition against him, headed by Cylo, a person of wealth and distinction in Crotona, who had been refused admission into the society of the Pythagoreans, and whose temper was too haughty and violent to endure with patience what he considered such an indignity; hearing that a number of the followers of our philosopher were assembled at the house of Milo, one of their chief friends, a party headed by Cylo surrounded the house, and set it on fire, about forty persons perished in the flames, Archippus and Lysis, two natives of Tarentum alone escaped; the former withdrew to his own city, the latter fled to Thebes.

Pythagoras, who was not present when this fatal attack was made on the members of his school, found himself incapable of resisting the torrent of enmity raised against him, and retired to Metapontum, after having in vain sought protection from the Locrians. There he still found himself surrounded with enemies, and was compelled to take refuge in the temple of the Muses, where being unable to procure a necessary supply of food, he perished by hunger, in the third year of the 68th Olympiad, 506 B. C., about the age of eighty. After his death, his disciples paid a superstitious veneration to his memory; they erected statues in honour of him, converted his house in Crotona into a temple of Ceres, and appealed to him as a divinity, swearing by his name.

Many fabulous tales are related of Pythagoras, which carry with them their own refutation. It appears from the history of this philosopher, that he owed much of his celebrity and authority to imposture; his manner of life confirms this opinion; clothed in a long white robe, with a flowing beard, and, as some relate, with a crown of gold on his head, he preserved among the people a commanding gravity and dignity of aspect. He had such command over himself, that he was not seen to express in his countenance grief, joy, or anger. He refrained from animal food, and confined himself to a vegetable diet, excluding for mystical reasons, pulse, or beans. By this demeanour, he succeeded in passing himself upon the vulgar as a being of an order superior to humanity, and persuaded them that he had received his doctrines from heaven. He had by his marriage two sons, Telauges and Mnesarchus, who continued his school after his death.

It has been a point much disputed, whether Pythagoras left behind him any writings: from the pains which he took to confine his doctrines to his own school during his lifetime, it appears improbable, that he ever committed his

philosophical system to writing; consequently that those pieces to which his name is affixed were written by some of his followers, according to the tenets they had previously learned. Plutarch, Josephus, and Lucian, confess that there were no genuine works of Pythagoras extant. Among the pieces attributed to him, however, there is not one of them more famous than the "Golden Verses," which Hierocles has illustrated with a commentary. It is generally agreed that they were not written by our philosopher, but by Epicharmus, or Empedocles. At the same time, they may be considered as a brief summary of his popular doctrines. The manner of instruction adopted by Pythagoras was two-fold, public and private; this distinction he had seen used with great advantage by the Egyptian priests, who found it well calculated to strengthen their authority, and increase their emoluments. For the general benefit of the people, he held public assemblies, in which he delivered discourses in praise of virtue, and in condemnation of vice; in these he gave particular instructions in different classes, to husbands and wives, parents and children, and also to others who filled the several stations of society. The audience of these assemblies did not properly belong to his school, but continued to follow their usual mode of living. His select body of disciples, whom he called his companions and friends, submitted to a peculiar plan of discipline, and were admitted after a long course of instruction into all the mysteries of his private doctrine. Before any one could be admitted into this fraternity, he underwent an examination by Pythagoras; and if approved of, he was put through a severe course of abstinence, rigorous exercise, and a long system of silence. After admission, his pupils were distinguished by the appellation of Pythagoreans and Mathematicians; when they had made sufficient progress in geometrical science, they were led to the study of nature, the investigation of primary principles, and a knowledge of the divinity. According to their respective abilities and

inclinations, some were engaged in the study of mathematics, oeconomics, and policy; others in managing the affairs of the fraternity, or were sent into the cities of Greece and Italy, to instruct the people in the principles of government, or to assist them in the institution of laws.

The brethren of the Pythagorean college at Crotona who were at least six hundred in number, lived together in one family, with their wives and children, in a public building, called *ομακοιον*, "the common auditory." The business of the society was conducted with perfect regularity. Every day was begun with a deliberation on the manner in which it should be spent, and concluded with a retrospect of the events which had occurred, and the business which had been transacted. They rose before the dawn that they might pay him homage, afterwards they repeated verses from Homer and other poets, and made use of music, both vocal and instrumental, to enliven their spirits, and fit them for the duties of the day. Several hours were then employed in the study of science, these were succeeded by an interval of leisure, or a quiet walk. The next part of the day was allotted to conversation; the hour before dinner was filled up with various kinds of athletic exercises. Their diet consisted of bread, honey, vegetables, and water. After they were initiated, they denied themselves the use of wine, and animal food was against the tenets of their system. The remainder of the day was devoted to civil and domestic affairs, conversation, bathing, and religious ceremonies.¹

After the dissolution of their fraternity by Cylo's faction, Lysis and Archippus, who were fortunate enough to escape, thought it necessary, in order to preserve the Pythagorean doctrines from oblivion, to reduce them to

¹ In modern days the principles of Mr. Owen, appear to be an illustration of a somewhat similar system.

systematic summary; at the same time strongly enjoining their children to preserve the memoirs secret, and transmit them in confidence to their posterity. From this period books began to multiply among the members of this sect; till at length, in the time of Plato, Philolaus exposed the Pythagorean records to sale, and Archytas, of Tarentum, gave Plato a copy of his commentaries upon the aphorisms and precepts of his master. The following may be considered as a delineation of the philosophy of Pythagoras.

The end of philosophy is to free the mind from those incumbrances which hinder its progress towards perfection, to raise it to the contemplation of immutable truth, and the knowledge of divine and spiritual objects. This effect must be produced by easy steps, lest the mind hitherto conversant only with sensible things, should revolt at the change. The first step towards wisdom is the study of mathematics, a science which contemplates objects that lie in the middle path, between corporeal and incorporeal beings, as it were, on the confines of both; and which most advantageously inures the mind to contemplation. The whole course of mathematical science may be divided into four parts, two respecting numbers, and two respecting magnitude. Number may be considered either abstractedly, in itself, or as applied to some object: the former science is arithmetic. Magnitude may be considered as at rest, or as in motion; the science which treats of the former is geometry, that which treats of the latter is astronomy. Arithmetic is the noblest science, numbers the first object of study, and a perfect acquaintance with numbers the highest good. Numbers are either scientific, or intelligible; scientific number is the production of the powers involved in unity, or the progression of multitude from the monad, or unity, and its return to the same. Unity and one are to be distinguished from each other, the former being an abstract conception, the latter belonging to things capable of being numbered.

Number is not infinite, but is the source of that infinite divisibility into equal parts which is the property of all bodies. Intelligible number is that which existed in the divine mind before all things, from which every thing has received its form, and which always remains immutably the same. It is the model, or archetype, after which the world in all its parts, is framed.

After numbers, music held the chief place in the preparatory exercises of the Pythagorean school, by means of which the mind was to be raised above the dominion of the passions, and inured to contemplation. Pythagoras considered music as an art, not only to be judged of by the ear, but as a science to be reduced to mathematical principles and proportions. The invention of the Harmonical Canon, or Monochord,¹ has been ascribed to him, both by ancient and modern writers; the great interest which he took in this science led him to the discovery of musical ratios by meditation and design. This philosopher imagined that the celestial spheres, in which the planets move, striking upon the ether through which they pass, must produce sound; and that such sound would vary according to the diversity of their magnitude, velocity, and relative distance. Taking it for granted, that every thing respecting the heavenly bodies is adjusted with perfect regularity, he further supposed that all the circumstances necessary to render the sounds produced by their motion harmonious, were fixed in such exact proportions, that perfect harmony is produced by their revolutions. This fanciful doctrine respecting the music of the spheres, gave rise to the names which this philosopher applied to musical tones.² He cultivated

¹ The Monochord is an instrument of a single string furnished with moveable bridges; contrived for measuring and adjusting the ratios of musical intervals by accurate divisions.

² The musical scale which he formed was after his death engraved in brass, and preserved in the temple of Juno at Samos.

geometry, which he had learned in Egypt; he also greatly improved it by investigating many new theorems, and digesting its principles in an order more perfectly systematical than had been done before. Several Grecians about this period, applied themselves to mathematical learning, particularly Thales in Ionia. Pythagoras appears, however, to have done more than any other philosopher of his time, towards reducing geometry to a regular science. His definition of a point is, a monad or unity with position. He taught that a geometrical point corresponds to unity in arithmetic, a line to two, a superficies to three, and a solid to four. Of the geometrical theorems ascribed to him, the following are the principal: that the interior angles of every triangle are together equal to two right angles; that the only polygons which will fill up the whole space about a given point, are the equilateral triangle, the square, and the hexagon—the first to be taken six times, the second four times, and the third three times; and that in rectangular triangles, the square of the side which subtends the right angle, is equal to the two squares of the sides which contain the right angle. Upon the invention of this latter proposition,¹ Plutarch says, that Pythagoras offered an ox to the gods; others say an hecatomb, but this statement is inconsistent with the institutions of our philosopher, which did not admit of animal sacrifices. Pythagoras calculated the stature of Hercules from the length of the Olympic course, which measured six hundred of his feet; observing how much shorter a course six hundred times the length of the foot of an ordinary sized man was than the Olympic course, he inferred, by the law of proportion, the length of the foot of Hercules; whence the usual proportion of the length of the foot to the height of a man, enabled him to determine the problem.

The doctrine of Pythagoras on astronomy was as follows.

¹ Euclid, L. 1. prop. 47.

The term heaven either denotes the sphere of the stars, or the whole space between the fixed stars and moon, or the whole world, including both the celestial spheres and the earth. There are ten celestial spheres of which are visible to us; namely, that of the fixed stars, those of the seven planets, and that of the earth. The tenth is the Antichthon, or an invisible sphere opposite the earth, which is necessary to complete the harmonic nature, as the Decad is the completion of numerical harmony; and this Antichthon may be the cause of the greater number of the eclipses of the sun than of the moon. The earth holds the middle place in the universe, or in the midst of the four elements is placed the fiery globe of unity. The earth is not without motion, nor situated in the centre of the celestial spheres, but is one of those planets which makes its revolution about the sphere of fire. The revolution of the earth is completed in thirty years, that of Jupiter in twelve, that of Mars in two, that of the Sun, of Mercury, Venus in one year. The distance of the several celestial spheres from the earth, corresponds to the proportional notes in the musical scale. The moon and other planetary globes, are habitable. The earth is a globe which is divided into two of antipodes. From several of these particulars it has been inferred, that this philosopher was possessed of the truth of the solar system, which was revived by Copernicus and fully established by Newton. It is quite evident, however, that his gleams of correct principle were overshadowed by crudeness and absurdity.

The pupils of his school were conducted from the preparatory study, to the knowledge of natural, theological and moral science. Concerning wisdom in general, Pythagoras taught, that it is the science conversant with objects in their nature immutable, eternal, incorrupt and therefore alone can be properly said to exist. A man who applies himself to this kind of study is a

sopher; the end of philosophy is, that the human mind may by such contemplation be assimilated to the divine, and at length be qualified to join the assembly of the gods. In the pursuit of wisdom, the utmost care must be taken to raise the mind above the dominion of the passions, and the influence of sensible objects, and to disengage it from all corporeal impressions, that it may be inured to converse with itself, and to contemplate things spiritual and divine; for this purpose the assistance of the Deity, and of good demons, must be invoked in prayer. Philosophy, as it is conversant with speculative truth, or with the rules of human conduct, is either theoretical or practical. Practical philosophy is only to be studied so far as may be necessary for the purposes of life; theoretical philosophy is the perfection of wisdom. Contemplative wisdom cannot be completely attained without a total abstraction from the ordinary affairs of life, and a perfect tranquillity and freedom of mind; hence the necessity of instituting a society separated from the world, for the purposes of contemplation and study.

According to Aristotle, active or moral philosophy, which prescribes rules and precepts for the conduct of life, was first taught by Pythagoras, and after his death by Socrates. Among the moral maxims and precepts ascribed to this philosopher, are the following—Virtue is divided into two branches, private and public; private virtue respects education, silence, abstinence from animal food, fortitude, sobriety, and prudence. The powers of the mind are, reason and passion; and when the latter is preserved in subjection to the former, virtue is prevalent. Young persons should be inured to subjection, that they may always find it easy to submit to the authority of reason. Let them be conducted into the best course of life, and habit will soon render it the most pleasant. Silence is better than idle words. A wise man will prepare himself for every thing which is

not in his own power. Do what you judge to be right, ever the vulgar may think of you; if you despise them, despise also their censure. It is inconsistent with for to relinquish the station, appointed by the supreme before we obtain his permission. Sobriety is the strength of the soul, for it preserves its reason unclouded by passion. No man ought to be esteemed free, who has not the command of himself. Drunkenness is a temporary passion. That which is good and becoming, is rather to be pursued than that which is agreeable. The desire of superfluities is foolish, because it knows no limits. All animal pleasures should rather be postponed, than enjoyed before their time, and should only be enjoyed according to nature, and sobriety. Forethought and discretion are necessary for the protection and education of children. Wisdom and temperance are our best defence, every other guard is weak and unstable. It requires much wisdom to give right names to things.

Public virtue as respects conversation, friendship, religious worship, and legislation. Pythagoras taught, conversation should be adapted to the character and condition of the persons with whom we converse; discretion and behaviour which might be proper among young persons may be exceedingly improper between the young and aged. Propriety and seasonableness are the first things to be regarded in conversation. In all society a due regard must be had to subordination. Respect is due to a word, stranger, sometimes in preference even to countrymen's relations. It is better that those who converse with you should respect you, than that they should fear you; respect produces admiration, but fear produces hatred. Modesty is the evident proof of a good education to be able to endure the want of it in others. Between friends the utmost discretion should be taken to avoid contention, which can only be done by shunning as much as possible all occasions of strife.

suppressing resentment, and exercising mutual forbearance. Reproof and correction are useful and becoming from the elder to the younger; especially when they are accompanied on the part of the reprover with evident tokens of affection. Mutual friendship is never for a moment to be interrupted, whether in jest or earnest; for nothing can heal the wounds made by deceit. A friend ought never to be forsaken in adversity, nor for any infirmity of human nature, excepting invincible obstinacy and depravity. Before we abandon a friend, we should endeavour by actions as well as words to reclaim him. True friendship is a kind of union which is immortal.

The design and object of all moral precepts, is to lead men to the imitation of God; since the Deity directs all things, every good thing is to be sought from him alone, and nothing is to be done which is contrary to his pleasure. Whilst we are performing divine rites, piety should dwell in the mind. The gods are to be worshipped not under such images as represent the forms of men, but by such symbols as are suitable to their nature, by simple lustrations and offerings, and with purity of heart. Gods and heroes are to be worshipped with different degrees of homage, according to their nature. Next to gods and demons, the highest reverence is due to parents and legislators; the laws and customs of our country are to be carefully observed.

Theoretical philosophy, which treats of nature and its origin, was the highest object of study in the Pythagorean school, and included the most profound mysteries of its master. His opinions were, that God is the universal mind, diffused through all things; the source of animal life, the proper intrinsic cause of all motion; in substance similar to light; in nature like truth; the first principle of the universe; incapable of pain, invincible, incorruptible, and only to be comprehended by the mind. Subordinate to the Deity, there

are three orders of intelligence, gods, demons, and heroes, who are distinguished by their respective degrees of intelligence and dignity, and by the nature of the homage due to them; gods to be preferred in honour to demons or demons; and demons to heroes, or men. These orders in the Pythagorean system were emanations, at different degrees of proximity from the supreme intelligent particles of ether assuming a grosser clothing the further they receded from the fountain. The third order, or heroes, were supposed to be invested with a subtle material clothing. Hierocles defines a hero as "a rational mind with a luminous body." To these three species, a fourth was added, the human mind. All these they imagined proceed from God, as the first source of intelligence to have received from him a pure, simple, and immortal nature. The Deity being himself one, and the origin of all diversity, they represented him under the denomination of monad, and subordinate intelligences, as numbers derived from the monad, and included in unity. The region of air was supposed to be full of spirits, demons, or heroes, the cause of sickness or health, who communicate by means of dreams, or other instruments of divination, knowledge of future events.

The material world, according to Pythagoras, was produced by the energy of the divine intelligence. It is an animated sphere, beyond which is a vacuum. It contains several spheres, which revolve with musical harmony. The atmosphere of the earth is a gross and morbid mass; but the air, or ether, which surrounds it, is pure, healthful, and is perpetually moving, the region of all divine and immortal natures. The sun, moon, and stars, are inhabited by portions of the divinity, or gods. The sun is a spherical body, and eclipses are caused by the passing of the moon between it and the earth. The moon is inhabited by demons. Comets are stars, which are not always seen, but rise at certain periods.

Regarding the nature of man, this philosopher taught, that consisting of an elementary nature, and a divine or rational principle, he is a microcosm, or compendium of the universe ; that is, his soul is a self-moving principle, composed of two parts; the rational, which is a portion of the soul of the world, seated in the brain; and the irrational, which includes the passions, and is seated in the heart ; that man participates in both of these with the lower animals, which from the temperament of their body, and their want of the power of speech, are incapable of acting rationally ; that the sensitive soul, *θυμος*, perishes ; but that the rational mind, *φρον*, is immortal, because the source whence it is derived is immortal ; that after the rational mind is freed from the chains of the body, it assumes an ethereal vehicle, and passes into the regions of the dead, where it remains till sent back to this world, to be the inhabitant of some other body, human, or otherwise ; and that after suffering successive purgations, when it is sufficiently purified, it is received among the gods, and returns to the eternal source from which it first proceeded. The doctrines of this philosopher respecting the nature of the inferior animals, and *μετεμψυχωσης*, the transmigration of souls, were the foundation of abstinence from animal food, adopted as a principle by his followers ; and of the exclusion of animal sacrifices from their religious ceremonies. This doctrine was without doubt learned by Pythagoras in Egypt, where it was commonly taught. It is beautifully represented by Ovid, who introduces the philosopher as saying ;

Morte carent animæ: semperque priore relicta
 Sede, novis domibus habitant, vivuntque receptæ.
 Omnia mutantur ; nihil interit ; errat et illinc,
 Huc venit, hinc illuc, et quoslibet occupet artus
 Spiritus, eque feris humana in corpora transit,
 Inque feras noster : nec tempore deperit ullo,
 Utque novis fragilis signatur cera figuris,

*Nec manet ut fuerat, nec formas servat eadem,
Sed tamen ipsa eadem est, animam sic semper eandem
Esse, sed in varias doceo migrare figuras.*

“ What then is death, but ancient matter drest
In some new figure, and a varied vest ?
Thus all things are but alter'd, nothing dies ;
And here and there th' unbodied spirit flies,
By time, or force, or sickness dispossess'd,
And lodges where it lights, in man or beast ;
Or hunts without, till ready limbs it find,
And actuates those according to their kind ;
From tenement to tenement is tost,
The soul is still the same, the figure only lost ;
And as the soften'd wax new seals receives,
This face assumes, and that impression leaves ;
Now call'd by one, now by another name,
The form is only chang'd, the wax is still the same :
So death, thus call'd, can but the form deface,
Th' immortal soul flies out in empty space,
To seek her fortune in some other place.”

After the death of the founder of the Italic sect, the care and education of his children, and the charge of his school, were undertaken by Aristæus, of Crotona. He was particularly eminent in the mathematical sciences, and wrote a treatise on Solids, which is mentioned with applause by the ancients. Having taught the doctrines of Pythagoras for thirty-nine years, he was succeeded by Mnesarchus, the son of Pythagoras. Schools of this sect were afterwards conducted in Heraclia, by Clinias and Philolaus; at Metapontum, by Theorides and Eurytus, and at Tarentum by Archytas. It may not be uninteresting to give a brief notice of the most eminent followers of Pythagoras, although they departed in various degrees from the precise doctrines of their master.

Alcmæon, of Crotona, acquired a high degree of reputation by his knowledge of nature, and his skill in medicine : he is said to be the first who attempted the dissection of a dead body. He imagined that natural objects, which appear multiform to men, are in reality two-fold ; intelligent natures, which are immutable, and material forms, which are infinitely variable. The sun, moon, and stars are eternal, and are inhabited by portions of that divine fire which is the first principle of nature. The brain is the chief seat of the soul. Health consists in preserving a due medium between the extremes of heat and cold, dryness and moisture.

Empedocles, of Agrigentum in Sicily, flourished about the 84th Olympiad, or 444 B. C. ; although of the Italic school, it is uncertain under what master he studied. By espousing the popular party, and favouring democratic measures, joined to his great wealth, he acquired such consequence in the state, that he ventured to assume several of the distinctions of royalty, such as, wearing a purple robe, a golden girdle, a Delphic crown ; he was followed by a train of attendants, and always retained a grave and commanding aspect. The skill which he possessed in medicine, with his knowledge in natural philosophy, enabled him to perform many cures. He, however, called in the aid of quackery and imposture, to favour his pretensions to the power of working miracles. Empedocles was a poet of considerable talent ; fragments of his verses are dispersed through the works of various ancient writers, and have been in part collected by Henry Stephens : he is also the reputed author of "The Golden Verses of Pythagoras." He died at sixty years of age : a statue was erected to his memory at Agrigentum, which was afterwards carried to Rome.

He considered that it is impossible to judge of truth by the senses, without the assistance of reason, which is led

by the medium of the senses, to the contemplation of real nature, and immutable essences of things. The principles of nature are of two kinds, active and passive; the active is unity, or God — the passive, matter. The active principle is a subtle, ethereal fire, intelligent and divine. This principle gives being to all things, animates all things, and into this all things will at last be resolved. Many demons, portions of the divine nature, wander through the region of space, and administer human affairs. Not only man, but brute animals are allied to the divine; for that one Spirit which pervades the universe, unites all animated beings to itself, and to one another; it is therefore unlawful to kill or eat animals which are allied to us by their principle of life. The world is one whole, circumscribed by the revolution of the sun, and surrounded by a vacuum, but by a mass of inactive matter. The first material principles of the four elements are similar atoms indefinitely small, and of a round form; they are eternal; nothing can begin to exist, or be annihilated; but all varieties of nature are produced by combination or separation.

The soul of man consists of two parts; the sensitive and the rational, a demon sprung from the divine soul of the world, and sent down into the body as a punishment for crimes in a former state, to remain there till it is sufficiently purified to return to God. In the course of the transmigration to which human souls are liable, they may inhabit only different human bodies, but the body of any animal or plant. All nature is subject to the immutable and eternal law of necessity.

Epicharmus, of the island of Cos, went with his father early in life to Megara, and afterwards to Syracuse, where he became a pupil in the Pythagorean school. The tyrant of Hiero prevented him assuming the public profession of

philosopher; he therefore applied himself to the study of dramatic poetry, and offended the Pythagoreans by introducing the doctrines and precepts of their founder upon the stage. No accurate account remains of his philosophical tenets. Among the apothegms ascribed to him are these. To die is an evil; but to be dead is no evil. Every man's natural disposition is his good, or evil demon. He who is naturally inclined to good is noble, though his mother were an Ethiopian.

Ocellus, the Lucanian, lived in the age preceding that of Plato; he wrote a book on the universe which is still extant; and from which Aristotle appears to have borrowed freely in his treatise on Generation and Corruption. This work in the state in which it now appears is not written in the Doric dialect; when the doctrines of the Pythagoreans became obscure, on account of the dialect in which they were written, they were converted by learned grammarians from the Doric to the Attic dialect. That it was originally written in the former dialect, is evident from the several parts preserved by Stobæus. The following is a summary of the doctrine of Ocellus. Some things are known by the certain evidence of nature, others are learned by probable reasoning and conjecture. The universe never had a beginning, and never will have an end. The world in its present beautiful form, is to be distinguished from the universe of which it was framed. Since there is nothing exterior to the universe, it is impossible that any thing which now exists should ever have been produced from, or should ever be reduced to nothing; individual beings are of limited duration, being subject to the changes of birth, increase, and decay in perpetual succession. The form of the world is spherical, and it continues perpetually to revolve without increase or diminution. Two things exist, production and its cause; the former the passive, the latter the active principle. Every region of nature is filled with inhabitants, the heavens

with gods, the air with demons or demi-gods, and the earth with men. The parts of the earth, and its inhabitants, changed and perish, the earth itself always remains.

Timæus, the Locrian, flourished in the Italic school during the time of Plato, who was indebted to him for his acquaintance with the doctrines of Pythagoras, who wrote his dialogue entitled *Timæus*, in honour of this philosopher, from the information he had received. This Pythagorean is the writer of a small piece concerning the soul of the world, preserved by Proclus, and in some editions prefixed to Plato's *Timæus*. In this treatise, although it follows nearly in the footsteps of the original founder, it differs from him in two particulars: the first, that instead of one whole, or monad, he supposes two independent causes of nature, God, or mind, the fountain of intelligent nature, and necessity, or matter, the source of bodies; the second, that he imagines the cause of the formation of the world to be, the external action of God upon matter, after the pattern, or ideas, existing in his own mind. On comparing this piece with the dialogue of Plato, it will be found that he has obscured the simple doctrine of the Locrian, either with fancies of his own, or from those of the Egyptian schools.

Archytas, of Tarentum, flourished above a century later than Pythagoras, and was the eighth in succession after him; he was one of the preceptors of Plato, with Timæus. Such was the celebrity of this philosopher, that many illustrious names appear in the train of his disciples, particularly Philolaus, Eudoxus, and Plato. He excelled not only in speculative philosophy, but also in geometry and mechanics. His reputation for political and moral wisdom was so great, that, contrary to the usual custom, he was appointed several different times to the supreme magistracy of Tarentum, in which authority he exercised with justice and moderation.

and endeared himself to his countrymen by affability and condescension. Of his writings none remain, except a metaphysical work "On the Nature of the Universe," preserved by Stobæus. His death, which is said to have been occasioned by shipwreck, is poetically described by Horace, who celebrates him as an eminent geographer and astronomer. Regarding the philosophical tenets of Archytas, the ancients are silent. Aristotle, who was an industrious transcriber from the Pythagoreans, borrowed from him the general arrangements which are usually called his ten categories. The sum of the moral doctrine of this philosopher is—that virtue is to be pursued for its own sake in every condition of life; that all excess is inconsistent with virtue; that the mind is more injured by prosperity than by adversity; that there is no pestilence so destructive to human happiness as pleasure; and that virtue to be consistent must avoid all extremes.

Philolaus, a native of Crotona, and who afterwards lived at Heraclea, was a disciple of Archytas, and flourished in the time of Plato. He was the first philosopher who divulged the Pythagoric doctrines, contrary to an oath taken by the society who followed them, to keep secret the mysteries of the sect. It was from him, as already mentioned, that Plato purchased the written records of the Pythagorean system. Interfering in affairs of state, Philolaus fell a victim to political enmity. He followed the opinion of Timæus, that there were two independent principles in nature, God and matter; it was from the same source that Plato derived part of his doctrines.

Eudoxus, of Gnidus, is the last celebrated name, which remains to be added to the list of Pythagorean philosophers. His first master was Archytas, by whom he was instructed in the principles of geometry and philosophy; about the age of twenty-three he went to Athens, and by the generous assistance of Theomedon, a physician, he was enabled to

attend the schools of philosophy in that city. In the fourth year of his age, he visited Egypt, where he was introduced by Agesilaus to king Nectanebis II. and by that sovereign to the Egyptian priests. Eudoxus was highly celebrated among the ancients for his skill in astronomy; but none of his writings of any kind are extant.

Xenophanes flourished 485 B. C.

This philosopher, the founder of the Eleatic sect, was native of Colophon, and according to Eusebius born in the 66th Olympiad, 516 B. C. He left his native country in early life, and went to Sicily, where he supported himself at the court of Hiero, by reciting elegiac and iambic verses which he had written in reprehension of the theogonies of Homer and Hesiod. From Sicily he passed over to Magna Græcia, where he became a professor of philosophy, and at the first instance a celebrated teacher in the Pythagorean school. Indulging however a greater freedom of thought than was usual among the disciples of that sect, he succeeded to introduce new opinions of his own, and in particular to oppose the doctrines of Thales and Pythagoras. This gave an opportunity to Timon, who was a severe satirist, to introduce him in ridicule as one of the characters in his dialogues. Xenophanes possessed a Pythagorean chair of philosophy about seventy years, and lived to the age of an hundred.

Of the writings of the Eleatic school, we have only a few fragments carefully collected by Stephens. We are obliged to rely chiefly for information on the authority of Plato and Aristotle, the former of whom, while he professes to explain their doctrines, is acknowledged to have adulterated them with opinions of his own; and the latter, in a treatise regarding Xenophanes, Zeno, and Gorgias, has not scrupled to misrepresent their principles, that he might the more easily refute them. These circumstances render it difficult to relate with confidence the doctrines of the Eleatic school.

Although the founder, whose tenets are now under inquiry, was an Ionian, three of its most celebrated preceptors, Parmenides, Zeno, and Leucippus, having been natives of Elea, or Velia (a town in Magna Græcia, built by a colony of Phœceans in the time of Cyrus), the sect derived its name from that place, and was called the Eleatic. It is properly divided into two classes; one which treated of the nature and origin of things upon metaphysical principles, the other upon physical. To the former belong Xenophanes, Parmenides, Melissus, and Zeno of Elea; to the latter Leucippus, Democritus, Protagoras, Diagoras, and Anaxarchus.

In metaphysics Xenophanes taught, that if ever there had been a time when nothing existed, nothing could ever have existed; that whatever is, always has been from eternity, without deriving its existence from any prior principle; that nature is one, and without limit; that what is one is similar in all its parts, else it would be many; that the one infinite, eternal, homogeneous universe, is immutable and incapable of change; that God is one incorporeal eternal Being, and like the universe, spherical in form; that he is of the same nature with the universe, comprehending all things within himself; is intelligent, and pervades all things; but bears no resemblance to human nature, either in body or mind. In physics he held, that there are innumerable worlds; that there is in nature no real production, decay, or change; that there are four elements, and that the earth is the basis of all things; that the stars arise from vapours, which are extinguished by day, and ignited by night; that the sun consists of fiery particles collected by humid exhalations, and daily renewed; that the course of the sun is rectilinear, and only appears curvilinear from its great distance; that the moon is an inhabited world; that the earth as appears from marine shells, which are found at the tops of mountains, and in caverns far from the sea, was once a general mass of waters; and that it will at length return into the same state, and pass

through an endless series of revolutions. This philosophy certainly made no improvement in wandering from the trines of Pythagoras, whom he appears to have exceeded in speculative absurdity.

The followers of Xenophanes were Parmenides continued the sect at Elea, his native city, and wished about the 69th Olympiad; Melissus, of Samos; Zeno, called the Eleatic, to distinguish him from Zeno the Stoic.

A second class of philosophers arose from this school who treated subjects physically; and who, giving metaphysical explanations of the cause of things, attempted to account for the phenomena of nature from the laws of matter and motion. The author of this innovation was Leucippus, a native of Elea, and a disciple of Zeno, the Eleatic philosopher. He wrote a treatise on Nature, now lost, from which it may be inferred that the ancients collected what they relate concerning his doctrine. Dissatisfied with the metaphysical subtleties by which former philosophers of this school had confounded all science from the senses, Leucippus, and his follower Democritus, determined if possible to discover a system consonant to reason. Leaving behind them the whole of fanciful conceptions, numbers, ideas, proportions, and other abstractions, they sought for the simple elements, and elementary forms, in which philosophers hitherto taken refuge, as the asylum of ignorance, they resolved to examine the real constitution of the material world, and inquire into the mechanical properties of bodies, that from these they might, if possible, deduce some certain knowledge of natural causes, and hence be able to account for natural appearances. For this purpose they introduced the doctrine of indivisible atoms, possessing within themselves a principle of motion. Other philosophers before their time had considered matter as divisible into i

finitely small particles, particularly Anaxagoras and Empedocles ; but Leucippus and Democritus were the first who taught that these particles were originally destitute of all qualities, excepting figure and motion, and therefore may justly be reckoned the authors of the Atomic¹ system of philosophy. They looked upon the qualities which their predecessors had ascribed to matter, as the mere fancies of abstraction, and they determined to admit nothing into their system which they could not establish upon the testimony of the senses. They were of opinion that both the Eleatic philosophers, and those of other sects, had unnecessarily circumscribed their respective systems, by assigning some external or internal cause of motion, of a nature not to be discovered by the senses. They therefore resolved to reject all metaphysical principles ; and in their explanation of the phenomena of nature, to proceed on no other ground than the sensible and mechanical properties of bodies. By the aid of the internal principle of motion, which they attributed to the indivisible particles of matter, they made a feeble and fanciful effort to account for the production of all natural bodies from physical causes alone.

¹ The Atomic theory, as applied by Mr. Dalton to the aid of chemistry, in modern days, has been looked up to as one of the most happy and brilliant efforts of talent. It has many points of resemblance to the fluxionary calculus in mathematics. Both give us the ratios of quantities ; both reduce investigations that would be otherwise extremely difficult to the utmost simplicity ; and what is curious, both have been subjected to the same kind of ridicule by persons who have not put themselves to the trouble of studying them with such attention as to understand them completely. Scientific chemistry, which is not of much longer standing than half a century, has within the last twenty-five years, lighted our streets with gas, navigated our rivers by steam, and enabled us to travel on land at thirty miles an hour, with more ease than formerly at eight. As this most important science is still in its infancy, it is impossible to hazard a conjecture on what the lapse of years may produce.

The first idea of the Atomic theory was suggested by Leucippus; it was followed by Democritus, and continued by Epicurus. The following summary of the doctrine of Leucippus will exhibit the infant state of the Atomic philosophy, and at the same time expose its speculative absurdities. The universe, which is infinite, is in part a plenum, and in part a vacuum. The first contains innumerable corpuscles or atoms of various figures, which falling into the vacuum struck against each other; and hence arose a variety of curvilinear motions, which continued till at length atoms of similar forms met together, and bodies were produced. The primary atoms being specifically of equal weight, but not being equal, on account of their multitude, to one another, the smaller rose to the exterior part of the vacuum, whilst the larger, entangling themselves, formed a spherical shell, which revolved about its centre, and which included within itself all kinds of bodies. This central mass gradually increased by a perpetual accession of particles from the surrounding shell, till at last the earth was formed. In the meantime, the spherical shell was continually supplied with new bodies, which in its revolution it gathered up from without. Of the particles thus collected, some by their combination formed humid masses, which by their circular motion gradually became dry, and were at length ignited, and became stars. The sun was formed in the same manner, in the exterior surface of the shell, and the moon in its interior surface. In this way the world was formed; and by an inversion of the process, it will at length be dissolved.

Democritus, the successor of Leucippus, was a native of Abdera, a town in Thrace, proverbial for the stupidity of its inhabitants. He was born in the first year of the 80th Olympiad, 460 B. C., and was contemporary with Socrates, Anaxagoras, Archelaus, Paménides, Zeno, and Protagoras. His birth was noble, and his patrimony large; the latter

expended in travelling into Egypt, Ethiopia, and Persia. After a long course of years he returned to his native city, richly stored with the treasures of philosophy, but destitute of the means of subsistence. His brother Damasis, however, received him kindly, and liberally supplied his exigencies. It was a law in Abdera, that whoever should waste all his patrimony, should be deprived of the rites of sepulture. Democritus, desirous to avoid such disgrace, gave public lectures, chiefly from his larger *Diacosmus*, the most valuable of his writings; and in return received from his hearers many valuable presents, and other testimonies of respect, which relieved him from all apprehension. There is no doubt that by his learning and wisdom, with his knowledge of herbs and plants, he acquired both fame and wealth among his countrymen.

Democritus has been commonly known under the appellation of the laughing philosopher; and it is gravely related by Seneca, that he never appeared in public, without expressing his contempt of mankind by laughter. This account, however, is wholly inconsistent with his fondness for a life of solitude, and profound contemplation. That he treated the follies of his countrymen with ridicule and contempt, is probably true, as he obtained the name of γελασιος, "the derider." He appears to have been in his conduct chaste and temperate, and his sobriety was repaid by a healthy old age. He lived, and enjoyed the use of his faculties, till the age of an hundred; his death was exceedingly lamented, and the charge of his funeral was defrayed from the public treasury. He wrote much, but none of his works are extant.

This philosopher taught concerning truth—That there are two kinds of knowledge; one, obscure, the other, genuine; the former, that which proceeds from the senses; the latter, that which is derived from the exercise of thought upon the nature of things. This exercise of thought to pro-

duce certain knowledge, he held to be exceedingly difficult; and therefore said, that truth lay in a deep well, from which it is the office of reason to draw it up. In physics his doctrine was, that nothing can be produced from that which has no existence, nor can any thing which exists be ever annihilated; whatever exists must therefore owe its being to necessary and self-existent principles. The first principles of all things are two, atoms and vacuum. The distinction between the doctrine of Democritus and that of former philosophers, concerning atoms is, that the latter conceived small particles endued with various qualities; whereas this philosopher imagined the qualities of bodies not to arise from any essential difference in the nature of primary particles, but to be the mere effect of arrangement. He considered the soul as mortal, and perishing with the body. In his moral doctrine, the enjoyment of a tranquil state of mind was, in his opinion, the great end of life, and consequently he taught moderation as the first law of wisdom. A few of the most valuable maxims ascribed to him are as follows.

He who subdues his passions is more heroic than he who vanquishes an enemy; yet there are men who, whilst they command nations, are slaves to pleasure. It is criminal not only to do mischief, but to wish it. He who enjoys what he has, without regretting the want of what he has not, is a happy man. We are most delighted with those pleasures which we have the fullest opportunity of enjoying. The sweetest things become the most bitter by excess. Do nothing shameful, though you are alone; revere yourself more than all other men. A man must either be good, or seem to be so. Every country is open to a wise man, for he is a citizen of the world. It is better for fools to be governed, than to govern. Rulers are chosen not to do evil, but good. By desiring little, a poor man makes himself rich. A cheerful man is happy, though he possess little; a fret-

ful man is unhappy in the midst of affluence. One great difference between a wise man and a fool is, that the former only wishes for what he may possibly obtain, the latter desires impossibilities. It is the office of prudence, where it is possible, to prevent injuries; but where this cannot be done, a wise regard to our own tranquillity will preserve us from revenging them. Democritus had many disciples, among whom were Protagoras, of Abdera, who acquired reputation at Athens, with the sophists and philosophers, for his eloquence and wisdom; Diagoras, of the island of Melos; and Anaxarchus, who flourished about the 110th Olympiad, 338 B. C.; this latter philosopher lived with, and enjoyed the confidence of Alexander the Great.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SOCRATIC SCHOOL FOUNDED BY SOCRATES; HIS LIFE, DOCTRINES, AND DEATH.

The philosophers of the Ionic school, while industriously employed in investigating the nature and origin of things, paid little attention to those subjects in which the happiness of life is immediately concerned. Too deeply engaged in profound speculations to attend to truths perhaps less brilliant, but more useful, they contented themselves with admiring virtue, and expressing disapprobation of vice, without taking pains to establish the principles, and inculcate the precepts of sound morality. The merit of correcting this error, and introducing a method of philosophising, which was calculated to improve the mind, and to cherish the virtues of social life, is solely to be ascribed to Socrates; the intellect of this great man enabled him to rise above his teachers, and taking advantage of the truths they were acquainted with, he rejected many of their errors, substituting new and more sublime doctrines, and giving to philosophy its true course, by directing its inquiries to the moral nature of man, which has justly entitled him to that high dis-

and severe struggle between Athens and Lacedæmon, he signalized himself at the siege of Potidæa by his valour, and the hardiness with which he endured fatigue. In an engagement where he saw Alcibiades falling down wounded, he advanced to defend him, saved him and his arms; and though the prize of valour was on this occasion due to Socrates, he generously gave his vote that it might be bestowed on Alcibiades, to encourage his rising merit. During the severity of a Thracian winter, whilst others were clad in furs, he wore only his usual clothing. Several years afterwards, this philosopher voluntarily entered upon a military expedition against the Bœotians, in an unsuccessful engagement at Delium; retiring with coolness from the field, he observed Xenophon lying wounded on the ground, he took him upon his shoulders, and bore him beyond reach of the enemy. Some time later, he went out a third time in a military capacity, in the expedition for reducing Amphipolis, but this proving unsuccessful, he returned to Athens where he remained till his death.

Socrates was sixty years of age, before he undertook to serve his country in any civil office; he was then chosen to represent his own district in the senate of five hundred. In this office, though at first exposed to some degree of ridicule, from a want of experience in the forms of business, he soon convinced his colleagues that he was superior to them in wisdom and integrity. Intimidated by the clamour of the populace, they passed an unjust sentence of condemnation against the commanders, who, after the engagement at the Arginusian islands, had been prevented by a storm from paying funeral honours to the dead. Socrates alone stood forward in their defence, and to the last refused to give his suffrage against them, declaring that no force should compel him to act contrary to justice. Under the subsequent oppression, he ever condemned the arbitrary and cruel proceedings of the thirty tyrants; and when his

boldness provoked their resentment, so that his life was in danger, fearing neither treachery nor violence, he still continued to support the rights of his fellow-citizens. The tyrants, probably to create some new cause of complaint against the philosopher, sent an order to him, with several other persons, to apprehend a wealthy citizen of Salamis; the rest executed the commission, but Socrates refused, saying, that he would rather himself suffer death than be instrumental in inflicting punishment unjustly on another. Such proofs of public virtue, in a military and civil capacity, entitle him to a distinguished place in the list of good citizens. But his highest honours arise from the manner in which he supported the character of a philosopher, and discharged the duties of a moral preceptor.


Having observed with regret, how much the opinions of the Athenian youth were misled, and their principles and taste corrupted, by the Sophists, who taught in their schools the arts of false eloquence and deceitful reasoning, Socrates formed the wise and generous design of instituting a new and more useful method of instruction. He considered the true end of philosophy to be, not an ostentatious display of superior learning and ability in subtle disputations, or ingenious conjectures, but to free mankind from the dominion of pernicious prejudices, to correct their vices, to inspire them with a love of virtue, and thus to conduct them in the path of wisdom to true felicity. He therefore adopted the character of a moral philosopher, and looking upon the whole city of Athens as his school, and all who were inclined to give him their attention as his pupils, he seized every occasion of communicating moral wisdom to his fellow-citizens. He passed his time chiefly in public: it was his custom, in the morning to visit the places made use of for walking and public meetings, the gymnasia, or schools for athletic exercises; at noon, to appear among the crowds in the Agora, the public bazaar, or exchange; and to spend the remainder

of the day in those parts of the city which were most frequented. Sometimes he collected an audience in the Lyceum, a pleasant meadow on the border of the river Ilyssus, where he delivered a discourse from the chair, whilst his auditors were seated on the benches around him. On other occasions he conversed in a less formal manner, in places of common resort, or with his friends at meals, or in their hours of amusement, making every place a school of instruction. Not only did he desire that young men of rank and fortune should attend his lectures, he also sought for disciples among mechanics and labourers.

The method of communicating knowledge chiefly made use of by Socrates was, to propose a series of questions to the person with whom he conversed, in order to lead him to some unforeseen conclusion; he first gained the consent of his respondent to some obvious truths, and then obliged him to admit others from their relation to those to which he had already assented. Without making use of any direct argument or persuasion, he preferred leading the person he was desirous to instruct, to deduce the truths of which he wished to convince him, as a necessary consequence of his own concessions. This mode of disputation was a system to which the Greeks were partial. Socrates commonly conducted these conferences with such address as to conceal his design, till the respondent had advanced too far to recede. He never assumed, however, the air of a morose or rigid preceptor, but communicated useful instruction with the ease and good humour of polite conversation. His discourses betray no marks of arrogance or vanity; he professed only "to know that he knew nothing." The great object of Socrates, in all his conferences and discourses, was, to lead men to an acquaintance with themselves; to convince them of their follies and vices, to inspire them with the love of virtue, and to furnish them with useful moral instruction. It was this conduct which drew from Cicero the remark, "that

Socrates was the first who called down philosophy from heaven to earth, and introduced her into the public walks and domestic retirements of men, that she might instruct them concerning life and manners." The moral lessons which he taught, he diligently practised; his conduct was uniformly such as became a teacher of moral wisdom. Through his whole life he discovered a mind superior to the attractions of wealth and power; contrary to the general practice of the preceptors of his time, he instructed his pupils without receiving from them any gratuity. He frequently refused rich presents, which were offered to him by Alcibiades and others, though importunately urged to accept them by his wife. The chief men of Athens sent him provisions, as they apprehended he might want them; he took what was necessary, and returned the rest. Observing the numerous articles of luxury exposed to sale in Athens, he exclaimed, "How many things are there which I do not want." With this philosopher moderation supplied the place of wealth; in his clothing and food he consulted only the demands of nature. He commonly appeared in a neat, but plain cloak, with his feet uncovered; and notwithstanding the simple fare of his table, he frequently invited men of superior rank to partake of his meals. When his wife, upon such occasions, expressed her dissatisfaction, he desired her to give herself no concern; for if his guests were sensible men, they would be contented with whatever they found at his table; if otherwise, they were unworthy of notice. "Whilst others," said he, "live to eat, wise men eat to live." He found by experience that temperance is the parent of health; it was owing to his regularity in this respect, that he escaped infection in the midst of the plague, which carried off so many of his fellow-citizens.

Socrates was not fortunate in his family; his wife Xantippe, concerning whose ill temper ancient writers relate many amusing tales, appears to have been not only of a



high, unmanageable spirit, but deficient in understanding, and froward in disposition. This philosopher, whilst he endeavoured to curb the violence of her temper, improved his own; and in a dialogue with Lamprocles, his son, he allows that she had domestic virtues, and we find her expressing affection for her husband during his imprisonment. When Alcibiades expressed his surprise, that his friend could bear to live in the same house with so perverse and quarrelsome a companion, Socrates replied, "that being daily inured to ill-humour at home, he was the better prepared to encounter annoyance and injury abroad."

This great philosopher left behind him nothing in writing; but his illustrious pupils, Xenophon and Plato, have in a great measure supplied this defect. The memoirs of Socrates, written by Xenophon, afford, however, a much more accurate idea of his opinions and manner of teaching, than the dialogues of Plato, who mixes his own conceptions, and those of other philosophers, with the opinions and language of his master. It is related that when Socrates heard Plato recite his *Lysis*, he said, "How much does this young man make me say which I never imagined!" Xenophon denies that Socrates ever taught natural philosophy, or any mathematical science, and charges with misrepresentation those who had ascribed to him dissertations of that kind, probably in allusion to Plato. The truth appears to be, that the distinguishing character of Socrates was, that of a moral philosopher.

In religion Socrates taught, that the Supreme Being, though invisible, is clearly seen in his works, which declare at once his power, his wisdom, and his benevolence. That he is omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent, the Creator and Preserver of all things. In his conferences with Aristodemus and Euthydemus, he says, "Reflect that your mind directs your body by its volitions, and you will be convinced that the Intelligence of the universe disposes all

things according to his pleasure. Can you imagine that your eye is capable of discerning distant objects, and that the eye of God cannot at the same instant see all things; or that, whilst your mind contemplates the affairs of distant countries, the understanding of God cannot attend at once to all the affairs of the universe? Such is the nature of the Divinity, that he sees all things, hears all things, is every where present, and constantly superintends all events." Again—"He who disposes and directs the universe; who is the source of all that is fair and good; who, amidst successive changes, preserves the course of nature unimpaired, and to whose laws all beings are subject; this Supreme Deity, though himself invisible, is manifestly seen in his magnificent operations. Learn, then, from the things which are produced, to infer the existence of an invisible power, and to reverence the Divinity."

Besides one great first cause, Socrates admitted the existence of beings who possess a middle rank between God and man, demons, or demi-gods; to whose immediate agency he ascribed the ordinary phenomena of nature, and whom he supposed to be particularly concerned in the management of human affairs. Hence, speaking of the gods who take care of men, he says, "Let it suffice you, whilst you observe their works, to revere and honour the gods: and be persuaded, that this is the way in which they make themselves known; for among all the gods who bestow blessings on men, there are none who, in the distribution of their favours, make themselves visible to mortals." He also spoke of thunder, wind, and other operations of nature, as servants of God, and he encouraged the practice of divination, under the belief that the gods sometimes discover future events to good men. Socrates declared it to be the duty of every one, in the performance of religious rites, to follow the customs of his country; at the same time he taught, that the merit of all religious offerings depends

upon the character of the worshipper, and that the gods take pleasure in the sacrifices of none but the sincerely pious. He says, "The man who honours the gods according to his ability, ought to be cheerful, and hope for the greatest blessings: for from whom may we reasonably entertain higher expectations, than from those who are most able to serve us? or how can we secure their kindness, but by pleasing them? or how please them better than by obedience?"

Regarding the soul of man, the opinions of Socrates according to Xenophon, were, that it is allied to the Divine Being, not by a participation of essence, but by a similarity of nature. That man excels all other animals in the faculty of reason, and that the existence of good men will be continued after death, in a state in which they will receive the reward of their virtue. Although it appears that on this subject Socrates was not altogether free from uncertainty, the consolation which he professed to derive in the immediate prospect of death, leaves little room for doubt that, he entertained a real belief and expectation of immortality. The doctrine ascribed by Cicero to Socrates on this head is, that the human soul is a divine principle, which when it leaves the body, returns to heaven; and that this passage is most easy to those who have in this life made the greatest progress in virtue.

The system of morality which Socrates made it the business of his life to inculcate, was founded upon the above principles of religion. The first impressions of virtue, which are common to mankind, are, according to this excellent moralist, laws of God; and he supports his opinion by the argument, that no man departs from such impressions with impunity. — He says, "It is frequently possible for men to screen themselves from the penalty of human laws; but no man can be unjust or ungrateful, without suffering for his crime; hence I conclude, that these laws must have

proceeded from a more excellent legislator than man." He also taught that true felicity is not to be derived from external possession, but from wisdom, which consists in the knowledge and practice of virtue;¹ that the cultivation of virtuous conduct is necessarily attended with pleasure as well as profit; that the good man alone is happy; and that it is absurd to separate things so closely united as virtue and interest. The principles which Socrates particularly inculcated were—reverence to the gods; temperance; to beware of vanity and arrogance; to practise virtue at all times; the submission of children to parents; love between brethren; and chastity in the marriage state. It is impossible to give an enlarged and correct idea of the moral doctrines of Socrates in detached sentences; the reader must consult that valuable treatise, "The Memorabilia of Socrates," by Xenophon, in which he will find the original conversations of this great philosopher on many interesting topics, related with that elegant simplicity which distinguishes the writings of that able general and historian; and where he will also observe the various duties laid down, firstly, to ourselves; secondly, to our neighbours or friends in a private capacity, as members of a private family; and thirdly, to our neighbours or friends in a public capacity, as members of civil society.

The wisdom and virtue of Socrates, whilst they procured him many followers, also created him numerous enemies; there was at this time a large body of professional teachers of eloquence, distinguished by the name of Sophists. By the mere flow of words, these men made a display of wisdom, upon a slight foundation of knowledge; they taught a false method of reasoning, by means of which, they were able in argument to make the worse appear the better cause.

¹ Job expresses a somewhat similar sentiment; "Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding." Chap. xxviii. v. 28.

At the same time that they assumed to themselves the merit of every kind of learning, they publicly practised the art of disputing with plausibility on either side of the question, and professed to teach this art to the Athenian youth. By these pretensions they collected in their schools a numerous train of young men, who followed them in hope of acquiring those talents, which would give them weight and authority in popular assemblies. In such repute were the Sophists, that they were liberally supported not only by contributions from their pupils, but also by a regular salary from the state, and were in many instances distinguished by public honours, and employed in offices of the magistracy. The good sense of Socrates revolted against such an abuse of language, and pernicious perversion of reason; his public spirit would not permit him to remain an inactive spectator of this growing evil. In order to dissipate the influence, which these pretenders to wisdom had acquired over the minds of the Athenian youth, Socrates daily employed himself, after his peculiar manner, in perplexing them with questions, ingeniously contrived to expose their ignorance, and to convince the public of their dishonesty. The result was, that the Sophists began to be deserted, and the youth to return to the pursuit of real knowledge. The contest, though salutary to Athens, proved in its issue fatal to this philosopher.

Finding their reputation and emoluments declining, the Sophists became inveterate in their enmity, and seized every occasion of exposing him to public ridicule or censure. They engaged Aristophanes to write a comedy, in which Socrates should be the principal character; and this man pleased with an occasion of displaying his malignant wit, undertook the task, and produced the piece called "The Clouds," which has been previously described. In this comedy, Socrates is introduced suspended in a basket in the air, and pouring forth absurdity and profaneness.

The philosopher, though he rarely visited the theatre, except when the tragedies of his friend Euripides were performed, attended the representation of this play, when the house was crowded with strangers who happened to be at Athens during the celebration of the festival of Bacchus. When the performer, who represented our philosopher, appeared on the stage, a general whisper passed along the benches on which the strangers were seated, to inquire who the person was whom the poet meant to satirize. Socrates, who had taken his station in one of the most public parts of the theatre, observed this circumstance; and with great coolness immediately rose up to gratify the curiosity of the audience, and continued standing during the remainder of the representation. One of the spectators, astonished at the magnanimity which this action discovered, asked him, "whether he did not feel himself chagrined to be held up to public ridicule?" "By no means," replied Socrates, "I am only a host at a public festival, where I provide a large company with entertainment." The Athenians, who had a strong propensity to jealousy and scandal, suffered themselves for a time to be amused with this malignant libel. But the seasonable confidence and calm dignity which Socrates observed, screened him on this occasion from the assaults of envy and malice; and when Aristophanes attempted, in the following year, to renew the piece, with alterations and additions, he was so much discouraged as to be obliged to discontinue it.

After this attack, Socrates continued for many years to pursue his laudable design, of instructing and reforming his fellow-citizens. At length the inflexible integrity with which he discharged the duty of a senator, and the opposition he made to every kind of political corruption and oppression, both under the democracy and oligarchy, greatly increased the number of his enemies; and the conspiracy which had long been concerted against his life was

resumed, his opponents considering that there was now a prospect of success. The people were industriously reminded, that Critias, one of the most cruel of the thirty tyrants, and Alcibiades, who had insulted their religion by defacing the public statues of Mercury, and performing a mock representation of the Eleusinian mysteries, were formerly pupils of Socrates. The Athenians being thus artfully prepared for the sequel, his enemies preferred a direct accusation against him before the supreme court of judicature. His chief accusers were Anytus, a leather-dresser, who had long entertained a personal hatred against the philosopher, for reprehending his avarice, in depriving his sons of the benefits of learning, that they might pursue the gains of trade; Melitus, a rhetorician, or pleader, ready to undertake any action, however infamous, for the sake of money; and Lycon, glad of an opportunity for display. The accusation, which was delivered under the name of Melitus, runs thus—"Melitus, son of Melitus, of the tribe of Pythos, accuses Socrates, son of Sophroniscus, of the tribe of Alopece. Socrates violates the laws, in not acknowledging the gods which the state acknowledges, and by introducing new divinities. He also violates the laws by corrupting the youth. Be his punishment death."

This accusation was delivered upon oath to the senate, and Crito, a friend of Socrates, became surety for his appearance on the day of trial. Anytus soon afterwards sent a private message to Socrates, offering if he would desist from censuring his conduct, to withdraw his charges; but Socrates refused, and answered, "Whilst I live I will never disguise the truth, nor speak otherwise than my duty requires." The interval between the accusation and trial he spent in philosophical conversation with his friends, preferring to discourse upon any other subject than his own situation; Hermogenes, one of them, was much struck with this circumstance, and asked him, "Why he did not

employ his time in preparing his defence?" "Because," replied Socrates, "I have not been guilty of anything unjust." The eminent orator Lysias, composed an apology, which he requested Socrates to adopt, but he excused himself by saying, "that although eloquently written, it would not suit his character."

On the day of trial his accusers appeared in the senate, and attempted to support their charges in three distinct speeches. Plato, who was a young man, and a zealous follower of Socrates, then rose up to address the judges in defence of his master; but whilst apologizing for his youth, he was abruptly commanded by the court to sit down. This great philosopher, however, required no advocate; ascending the chair with the serenity of conscious innocence, and the dignity of superior merit, he delivered in a firm voice, an unpremeditated defence of himself, which silenced his opponents, and ought to have convinced his judges. After tracing the progress of the conspiracy which had been raised against him to its true source, the jealousy and resentment of men whose ignorance he had exposed, and whose vices he had reproved, he replied to the several charges brought against him by Melitus. He appealed to his frequent practice of attending the public religious festivals, to disprove that he had been guilty of impiety to the gods of his country. The crime of introducing new divinities with which he was charged, on the ground of the admonitions which he professed to have received from a good but invisible spirit, he disclaimed, by pleading, that it was no new thing for men to consult the gods, and receive instructions from them. To refute the accusation of his having been a corrupter of youth, he urged the example which he had uniformly exhibited of justice, moderation, and temperance, the moral principle and tendency of his doctrines, and the effect which had actually been produced upon the manners of the young. Too proud to solicit the

mercy of his judges, he called on them for that justice which their office and their oath obliged them to administer; and professing his faith and confidence in God, he resigned himself to their pleasure. His judges, however, so far from appreciating his noble demeanour, were irritated by it; they were accustomed to abject solicitation from those appearing before them as accused persons; they looked on his address as disrespectful, and declared him guilty of the crimes of which he stood accused.

Before the conclusion of his trial, Socrates had a right to demand an abatement of the punishment of death, for banishment, fine, or imprisonment; and when urged to do so, he replied, that he would choose neither of these punishments, for that would be to acknowledge himself guilty. His last address to the court was as follows—"Athenians, to keep you no longer in suspense, as you wish me to state what sentence I deserve, I condemn myself for having passed my life in instructing yourselves and children, for having neglected with that view all public employments and dignities; for having devoted myself entirely to the service of my country, in labouring incessantly to render my fellow-citizens virtuous and happy. I condemn myself to be maintained by the Prytaneum,¹ at the expence of the republic, for the remainder of my life." The judges irritated by the independent spirit of his former defence, became now enraged and inexorable; and proceeded to pass upon him the sentence of death, by condemning him to drink the juice of hemlock. Numerous instances are on record where despots of noble and magnanimous character (an instance of which we shall come to shortly, before we conclude the history of this great man) charmed with a reply denoting a kindred nobility of mind, have not only

¹ The Prytaneum was the council chamber in the citadel of Athens, where those who had deserved well of their country, received a sum from the public funds to support themselves.

accorded pardon, but also friendship to an accused party. But a body of men are seldom moved in a similar manner; there is far too much of presumptuous ignorance and innate stupidity to contend against, to offer a reasonable chance of such appeals being either appreciated or understood. Socrates received his sentence with perfect composure, and by a smile testified his contempt both for his accusers and judges; turning to his friends he expressed his satisfaction in the recollection of his past life, declaring himself firmly persuaded that posterity would do justice to his memory.

On the day of his condemnation, it happened that the ship set sail which was employed to carry the annual offering to the island of Delos. As it was contrary to the law of Athens, that during this voyage any capital punishment should be inflicted within the city, this circumstance delayed the execution of Socrates for thirty days. So long an interval of painful expectation, exhibited the character of this philosopher with still greater brilliance, and he continued to inculcate in his followers sentiments of virtue and morality. His friends, still anxious to save so valuable a life, urged him to attempt his escape, or at least permit them to convey him away; they had made every arrangement with his jailor, that it might be easily accomplished, offering a retreat in Thessaly; but Socrates rejected the proposal, as a violation of the laws, and asked them, if there were any place out of Attica where people did not die. On the return of the ship from Delos, the officers, to whose care he was committed, delivered to him early in the morning the order for his execution, and immediately, according to law, set him at liberty from his bonds. His followers, who came early to the prison that they might converse with their master during the day, found his wife sitting by him, with a child in her arms. As soon as Xantippe saw them, she burst into tears, and exclaimed, "O Socrates, this is the

last time your friends will ever speak to you, or you to them." That the tranquillity of his last moments might not be disturbed by her unavailing lamentations, he requested that she might be conducted home; and she left the prison with frantic expressions of grief. An interesting conversation then took place between Socrates and his friends, on the immortality of the soul. In the course of which, this philosopher expressed his disapprobation of suicide, and assured his friends that his chief support in his present situation, was an expectation of a happy existence after death; "It would be inexcusable in me," said he, "to despise death, if I were not persuaded that it will conduct me into the presence of the gods, who are the most righteous governors, and into the society of just and good men; but I derive confidence from the hope, that something of man remains after death, and that the condition of good men will then be much better than that of the bad." Towards the close of the day, he gave some necessary instructions to his domestics, and took his last leave of his children; the attendant of the prison then informed him, that the time for drinking the poison was come. The executioner, though accustomed to such scenes, shed tears as he presented the fatal cup. Socrates, without a change of countenance, and offering a prayer to the gods, that they would grant him a prosperous passage into the invisible world, composedly swallowed the draught, and resumed the conversation with his friends; at length the narcotic and sedative effect of the hemlock obliged him to lie down; and expressing his debt of gratitude to Æsculapius for having at length supplied him with a cure for all earthly ills, he expired in the 70th year of his age, 399 years before the Christian era.

His disciples and friends attended his funeral with every mark of respect and affectionate sorrow. Apprehensive, however, for their own safety, they soon afterwards left

Athens, and took up their residence in distant places; several of them visited the philosopher Euclid, of Megara, by whom they were kindly received. No sooner was the unjust condemnation of Socrates known throughout Greece, than a general indignation was kindled in the minds of good men, who universally regretted that so distinguished an advocate of virtue, should have fallen a sacrifice to envy and malignity. The Athenians themselves so remarkable for fickleness and caprice, were not long in discovering the fatal loss they had sustained; and their grief was violent and lasting. Miletus, his chief accuser, was put to death; Anytus, the leather-dresser, fled his country to escape the same fate; and Lycon was banished. A bronze statue was cast of the philosopher, a chapel was erected to his memory, called after his name, and he was worshipped as a demi-god. After a period of upwards of two hundred years, respect for the memory of this illustrious philosopher, saved Athens from destruction. Sylla, one of the most stern of Roman despots, on his march against Mithridates, king of Pontus, besieged and took the city which had afforded aid to that sovereign; the conqueror was determined to bury it in ruins, but when he saw its porticos, and remembered that Socrates and his disciples had taught under them, he turned from the fierceness of his anger, and spared the living, from regard to the memory of the dead. It must be admitted, that there is much about the character of the ancients to interest and charm us; the antique grandeur and sublime nobility of soul so frequently exhibited by them, are not the least fascinating features.¹

¹ The Roman people appear to have taken a judicious view of the character of Sylla; astonished and charmed at his courage and magnanimity, in laying down of his own freewill the supreme power, when sole master of the republic, and retiring into a private station; they forgave the sternness of his despotism, and accorded to him their respect and admiration. His funeral was very magnificent, being attended by the senate, and even by the vestal virgins:

The death of Socrates is one of those striking and melancholy instances, of the danger which hangs over every man who too far outstrips the knowledge of his age and country. The Athenians listened with delight to Anaximander, whose doctrines were not regulated by the severity of reason; Anaximenes pleased them for the same cause; but Anaxagoras was banished; and Socrates, the most excellent of the Grecian moralists, lost his life. There can be no doubt, however, that it was a feeling of religious bigotry and intolerance, which gave a fatal effect to the unjust accusation against him; the Athenians were not only superstitious, they also became furiously vindictive, when an idea was raised, that their religion was in question. That human beings should be so idiotically absurd, and so monstrously foolish, as to imagine, that in tormenting and putting to death their fellow-men, they are acting in a manner pleasing to God, might well provoke ridicule and derision, were it not for the painful form in which it obtrudes the perverse malignity and dreadful depravity of which the human heart is capable. We must not however be too severe upon the conduct of the Greeks, remembering that other sects, in comparatively modern times, have far exceeded them in persecution and cruelty. The divine Founder of Christianity, to his doctrines of sublime faith and pure morality, added universal charity; he told us, that the grand acting principle of his religion, was love to God, in the first instance; and love to each other, in the second; that the latter was not merely to be a passive, but an active principle; that we were to do what is difficult to our frail nature, we were to return blessing for cursing, and to pray for happiness to those who despitefully use us. The supreme benevolence of this doctrine is equal to its wisdom, for surely examples of excel-

hymns were sung in celebration of his victories, and in honour of his memory.

•

lence and kindness are more likely to make converts, than intolerance and persecution. From such doctrines we are enabled to draw two conclusions, as simple and certain, as any fixed rule in mathematics. Firstly, that if charity and good-will be not inculcated by a religion, it is bad in itself; and secondly, that if in defiance of such principles being laid down to us, we are intolerant, then we are bad in ourselves. The author hopes, that the time is approaching when the increasing intelligence of mankind, will enable them to comprehend and appreciate the beauty and excellence of universal charity towards each other in religious matters. Doubtless, ignorance has been the chief cause of bigotry and intolerance; it is very rarely indeed that a highly educated and talented man is found a persecutor. It will be a happy change in society, when people are convinced that the worst uses to which religion can be put, are those of strife, revenge, and cruelty.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ACADEMIC SECT FOUNDED BY PLATO — THE PERIPATETIC BY ARISTOTLE — THE CYNIC, STOIC, EPICUREAN, AND SCEPTIC SECTS — OBSERVATIONS ON GRECIAN PHILOSOPHY.

The most renowned of the disciples, and followers of Socrates, was Plato, the founder of the Academic sect; a philosopher, whose doctrines have had a more extensive influence over the minds of men than those of any other among the ancients. This is partly owing to their merit, and partly to the eloquence with which they have been propounded. When other sects fell into oblivion, the Platonic philosophy, united with the Peripatetic, still flourished. Even in the present day, his writings give a tincture to the speculations and language of philosophy.

Plato flourished 395 B. C.

This philosopher was by descent an Athenian, although


the place of his birth was the island of Ægina, where his father Aristo resided after it had become subject to Athens. He was highly descended, in both branches of his family, from Codrus and Solon; and was born in the third year of the 87th Olympiad, 430 B. C. He studied under the most renowned professors of his day, and in early youth applied with particular diligence to the arts of painting and poetry; in the latter he made considerable proficiency, and produced an epic poem, which, on comparing with the works of Homer, he committed to the flames. At the age of twenty he began to attend the discourses of Socrates, and was so captivated by his eloquence, that he determined to relinquish all pretensions to poetical distinction, and to turn his talent into the channel of philosophy; he therefore forsook the muses, burned his poems, and applied himself entirely to the study of wisdom.

This philosopher remained with Socrates, in the relation of a disciple, for eight years. During this period he sometimes displeased his master and his followers, by mixing foreign tenets, and grafting upon the Socratic stock, opinions which were taken from other philosophers. Plato, nevertheless, retained a zealous attachment to Socrates. When that great and good man was summoned before the senate, Plato, as we have seen, undertook to plead his cause, and began a speech in his defence, but the partiality of the judges would not permit him to proceed. After the condemnation of his master, Plato presented him with a sum of money for the purpose of redeeming his life, which Socrates declined to accept. During his preceptor's imprisonment, he was unwearied in his attendance and assiduity; and was present at the last conversation which Socrates held with his friends on the immortality of the soul; the substance of which he afterwards committed to writing, in the beautiful dialogue, entitled *Phædo*, not however without throwing in his own opinions and language. After the funeral

of his master, he withdrew, with several friends to Megara, where they were hospitably entertained by Euclid, and here he remained and studied under him the art of reasoning, till the ferment at Athens had subsided.

Anxious to become master of the learning and wisdom of his age, he set out upon an extensive course of travelling. He first visited that part of Italy, called Magna Græcia, and was instructed in the mysteries of the Pythagorean system, the subtleties of which he afterwards blended with the simple doctrine of Socrates; he next went to Cyrene, and studied under Theodorus the science of mathematics; he then sailed for Egypt, for the purpose of acquiring knowledge in astronomy. That he might travel through the latter country in safety, he assumed the character of a merchant, and as a seller of oil traversed the kingdom of Artaxerxes Mnenon. Wherever he came, he obtained information from the Egyptian priests, concerning their astronomical observation and calculations. "Whilst studious youth," says Valerius Maximus, "were crowding to Athens from every quarter in search of Plato, for their master, that philosopher was wandering along the banks of the Nile, or the vast plains of a barbarous country, himself a disciple to the old men of Egypt."

When Plato had by his travels obtained an intimate acquaintance with the philosophical treasures of distant countries, he returned to Italy to the Pythagorean school at Tarentum, where he endeavoured to improve his own system by incorporating with it the doctrine of Pythagoras, as it was then taught by Archytas, Timæus, and others. Afterwards, when he visited Sicily, he retained such an attachment to the Italic sect, that through the bounty of Dionysius, he purchased at a high price several books, which contained their doctrines, from Philolaus, one of the disciples. His dialectics he borrowed from Euclid, of Megara; the principles of natural philosophy he learned in the Eleatic



school from Hermogenes and Cratylus; and combining these, with the Pythagorean doctrine of natural causes, he framed from both his system of metaphysics. Mathematics and astronomy he was taught in the Cyrenaic school, and by the Egyptian priests. From Socrates he received the pure principles of moral and political wisdom, which he afterwards obscured by the Italian speculations.

Returning home, imbued with knowledge of various kinds, Plato settled in Athens, and carried into effect the design, which he had for a long time held in contemplation, that of forming a new school for the instruction of youth in the principles of philosophy. The place which he made choice of for this purpose was a public grove, called the Academy, from Hecademus, who had left it to the citizens for the purpose of gymnastic exercises. Adorned with statues, temples, and sepulchres, planted with lofty plane trees, and intersected by a gentle stream, it afforded an admirable retreat for philosophy and the muses. Within this enclosure he possessed, as a part of his patrimony, a garden, in which he opened a school for the reception of those who might be inclined to attend his instructions. Of the importance which Plato ascribed to mathematical studies, and how necessary a preparation he considered them for higher speculations, appears from the inscription he placed over the door of his Academy:—

Θυδεις γεωμετρης εισιτω.

“Let no one unacquainted with geometry enter here.”

This school soon became famous, and its master was ranked among the most eminent philosophers. Plato certainly possessed one of the most luxuriant minds of antiquity, while he was endowed with more brilliancy of imagination than depth of judgment. His travels into distant countries where learning and wisdom flourished, gave him celebrity among his brethren of the Socratic sect. None of these had ven-

court of the latter, and made several bold, but unsuccessful attempts to subdue his haughty and tyrannical disposition. The chief secret of Plato's continued popularity, appears to have been, that while the morality of Socrates was practical, his was speculative; there was nothing in it which could really be laid hold of, besides being set off with all the charms of eloquence.

Plato visited the courts of various princes, in the hopes of seeing his ideal plan of a republic realized. In his final return to Athens, he passed through Elis, during the celebration of the Olympic games, and attracted universal attention. Having devoted himself to science, he spent even the last years of a long life in the instruction of youth; enjoying the advantages of an athletic constitution, and having lived with temperance, he arrived at the seventy-eighth year of his age, and died from decay of nature in the first year of the 108th Olympiad, 348 B. C.

This philosopher passed his life in a state of celibacy and left no heirs; he transferred his effects by will to his friend Adiamantus. The grove and garden, which had been the scene of his philosophical labours, at last afforded him a sepulchre. Statues and altars were erected to his memory; the day of his birth long continued to be celebrated as a festival by his followers, and his portrait is still preserved in gems. The most lasting monuments of his genius, however, are his writings, which have been transmitted without serious injury to the present time.

The personal character of Plato has been differently represented. On the one hand, his admirers have not failed to adorn him with every excellence, and to express a superstitious veneration for his memory. On the other, his enemies have not scrupled to load his memory with reproach, and charge him with practices shamefully inconsistent with the dignity of the philosophical character. While we be-

lieve that he was not free from human frailties, there appear no reasonable grounds to doubt that his private conduct was pure and amiable. From particular anecdotes recorded of him, we know, that he was careful to put a curb over his temper, to avoid giving way to anger, and that he was hospitable, beneficent, and generous.

It is from the writings of Plato that we are to form a judgment of his merit as a philosopher, and of the service which he rendered to science. It is easy to perceive that his diction always retained a strong tincture of that poetical spirit, with which he was deeply imbued. This is the chief ground of those lofty encomiums which ancient and modern critics have passed upon his language; and particularly of the high estimation in which it was held by Cicero, who treating on the subject of language, says, that, "If Jupiter were to speak in the Greek tongue, he would use the style of Plato:" and Aristotle describes it as "a middle species of diction, between verse and prose." Some of his dialogues are certainly elevated by sublime and glowing conceptions, enriched with copious and splendid diction, and flow so harmoniously, that they may correctly be pronounced highly poetical. Many of them are justly admired for their literary merit; the introductions are pertinent and amusing; the course of the debate, or conversation, is clearly marked; the characters are accurately supported; and the whole is with much art adorned and enlivened by those minute embellishments, which render the colloquial mode of writing so peculiarly pleasing. Even upon abstract subjects, moral, metaphysical, or mathematical, his diction is often marked by sweetness, simplicity, and clearness. In these parts of his works, it is believed that Socrates and Lysias were his models. At other times, however, we find him swelling into the turgid style, and involving himself in obscurities, which were either the offspring of a lofty fancy, or borrowed from the Italian school.

These faults in the writings of Plato were noticed by several ancient critics. Dionysius, of Halicarnassus, particularly censures Plato for the harshness of his metaphors, and his bold innovations in the use of terms, and quotes from his *Phædrus* examples of the bombastic, the puerile, and the frigid style. The same inequality may also be observed in his conceptions; whilst adhering to the school of Socrates, and discoursing upon moral topics, he is far more pleasing, than when he loses himself in the abstruse speculations of Pythagoras.

The Dialogues of Plato, which treat of various subjects, and were written with different views, are classed by the ancients under the two heads of Didactive and Inquisitive; and may be divided into physical, logical, ethical, and political. His writings were originally collected by Hermodorus, one of his pupils; they consist of thirty-five dialogues, and thirteen epistles.¹

In philosophy, Plato disliked the sober method of reasoning introduced by Socrates, he therefore left his first master in search of other preceptors. His natural propensity towards extreme refinement in speculation, and the celebrity of the Italian school, which abounded in subtleties, induced him to attach himself to the Pythagorean philosophy. He afterwards studied, as has been mentioned, under the Egyptian priests, who seduced him still farther from the path of common sense. Among other things which Plato learned from foreign philosophers, was the art of concealing his real sentiments; his inclination towards this kind of secrecy appears not only from the obscure language which abounds in his writings; it is to be learned from his own assertions, where he says, "It is a difficult thing to discover the nature of the Creator of the universe; and, being discovered, it is

¹ They were first published, after the invention of printing, by Aldus Manutius, at Venice, A. D. 1513.

impossible, and would even be impious, to expose the discovery to vulgar understandings." Again, "It would be to no purpose to lay open to mankind at large the doctrines of philosophy, which are adapted only to the comprehension of a few intelligent persons, who, from imperfect hints, are capable of conceiving their full import." He had seen how successfully both the Pythagoreans and the Egyptians employed the art of concealment to excite the admiration of the vulgar, who are always inclined to imagine something more than human in things which they do not comprehend.

It must not be denied, however, that a want of perspicuity in the writings of Plato, arises from the extreme subtlety of his speculations on abstract and sublime topics. His implicit followers have endeavoured to exculpate their master from the charge of obscurity, accusing his readers of dullness in their conceptions. But those who are well acquainted with the Platonic philosophy will acknowledge that it partakes largely of the intricacy and enthusiasm of the Pythagorean system. It is with reason, that Xenophon, in his Epistle to Æschines, censures Plato for neglecting the sober philosophy of Socrates; and through a vain affectation of extraordinary refinement, and a partiality for the mysteries of Egypt, and for the prodigies of Pythagoras, devoting himself to subtle speculations, and becoming a haughty professor of wisdom. That this accusation was not dictated by envy, but founded on truth, is proved by the whole constitution of the Platonic system, which, raising man above his condition and nature, unites him to certain imaginary divine principles, highly flattering to his pride; leads him through various orders of emanation and forms of intelligence to the Supreme Being, representing these fictions of fancy as the first principles of wisdom. In such an extraordinary maze of words does this philosopher involve his ideas, that none of his disciples, not even the sagacious Aristotle, could unfold them; and yet they have been received by

the credulity of ignorance as sacred mysteries, which, not being comprehended, have led to the supposition that our intellects are too feeble to penetrate his conceptions, and that our eyes are blinded by that resplendant blaze of truth, upon which his eagle sight alone could gaze with impunity.

The great ambition of this philosopher appears to have been to found a new sect: endued with more brilliancy of fancy, than strength of judgment, he collected the tenets of other philosophers, which were in many particulars contradictory, and could by no exertion of ingenuity be made to coalesce; out of such a heterogeneous mass he framed a system destitute of regular form, or consistency. The philosophy of Plato, as he himself suggests, may be divided into three branches. The first, treats of the art of reasoning, or dialectics; the second, of theoretical questions concerning nature, or physics; the third, of practical subjects respecting life and manners, or ethics.

This philosopher held wisdom to be the knowledge of those things which truly exist, and are comprehended by the intellect, particularly those which respect God, and the soul as distinct from the body. Philosophy is the desire of divine science, or the liberation of the mind from the body, and its direction towards those real essences, which are perceptible only by the understanding. A philosopher must possess a mind naturally turned towards contemplation, an ardent love of truth, a penetrating judgment, and a retentive memory; he must also be inured to the exercise of temperance and fortitude, that nothing corporeal may divert him from the pursuit of wisdom. Philosophy, as it is employed in the contemplation of truth, is termed theoretical; as it is conversant in the regulation of actions, it is practical. Theoretical philosophy produces a contemplative life, in which the mind occupied in meditations purely intellectual, acquires a resemblance to the divinity. Practical philosophy leads to an active life, and applies the principles of wisdom

to the benefit of society. Besides the contemplation of truth and virtue, the philosopher will inquire into the right conduct of the understanding, and the powers of speech, in the pursuit of knowledge, or will study the art of reasoning and disputation. The office of philosophy is threefold, dialective, theoretical, and practical.

The doctrine of Plato, in his Dialogues on Dialectics is, that truth is discerned, not by the senses, but by the understanding. The human intellect is employed, either upon things which it comprehends by itself, in their nature simple and invariable; or upon things subject to the senses, and perpetually liable to fluctuation and change. The contemplation of the former creates science; attention to the latter produces opinion. Sense is the passive perception of the soul through the medium of the body. When the forms of things, by means of the corporeal organs, are so deeply impressed upon the mind, as not to be easily effaced by time, this permanent impression is called memory. From the union of sense and memory, or from the comparison of a present with a recollected perception, arises opinion. Where these agree, the opinion is true; where they differ, it is false. The seat of perception and memory is like a waxen tablet, or picture, which the mind contemplates, and thence frames opinions. In meditation, the soul converses with itself; thought flows through the lips by means of the vocal organs. Intellection is the operation of the understanding contemplating intelligible forms or ideas: it is twofold; the first, that of the soul contemplating ideas before it descends into the body; the other, that which it exercises after it is immersed in the body, which may be termed natural knowledge. This kind of knowledge consists in the recollection of those things which the mind had known in its pre-existent state, and differs from memory in the object; memory being employed upon sensible things, reminiscence upon things purely intelligible. The intelligible objects of contemplation are either primary or secondary; the primary are

ideas, the secondary are the forms inseparable from material objects. The mind, in exercising its judgment, considers theoretically what is true or false, and practically what may or may not be done.

Dialectics also consider the essence and accidents of things, making use of division, definition, and analysis. Division separates the genus into its species, the whole into parts, and the like. Definition expresses the genus of the thing to be defined, and distinguishes it from others, by adding its specific difference. Analysis rises from objects of sense to intelligibles; from demonstrable propositions to axioms, or from hypothesis to experience. Induction proceeds from individuals to universals. Syllogism produces a conclusion by means of some intermediate proposition. These topics are cursorily touched upon by Plato; and it is rather by examples than precepts that he teaches the true art of reasoning, or exposes the fallacies of sophistry. The ingenious deceptions practised by the Sophist, are clearly represented in several of the dialogues of this philosopher, particularly in his *Euthydemus* and *Sophista*. Rhetoric is an art, which he thought unfavourable to the study of philosophy; he inveighs against it with vehemence in his *Gorgias*, and the ground of his invective is judiciously explained by Quintilian. Etymology Plato particularly treats of in his *Cratylus*, and in which he maintains, that names when rightly given, correspond to the nature of the things which they represent.

The theoretical philosophy of Plato is divided by him into three branches, theological, physical, and mathematical. On theology, the fundamental doctrine of this, as of all the other ancient philosophers, is, that from nothing, nothing can proceed. This axiom he applied not only to the Infinite efficient, but to the material cause; and in his *Timæus*, he lays it down as the ground of his reasoning concerning the origin of the world. In this dialogue, which comprehends his doctrine on the subject of the formation of the universe,

matter is manifestly spoken of as eternally co-existing with God. It is certain that Cicero, Apuleius, Alcinous, and Chalcidius, understood this philosopher only in the sense, as admitting two primary principles, God and matter. Through the whole dialogue of *Timæus*, Plato appears to suppose two eternal and independent Causes of all things: one, that by which all things are made, which is God; the other, that from which all things are made, which is matter; he imagines the architect of the world to have formed it out of a mass of pre-existent matter. The doctrine of Plato is thus explained by Cicero—"Matter, from which all things are produced and formed, is a substance without form or quality, but capable of receiving all forms, and undergoing every kind of change: in which it never suffers annihilation, but merely a solution of its parts, which are in their nature infinitely divisible, and move in proportions of space also infinitely divisible. When that principle which we call quality is moved, and acts upon matter, it undergoes an entire change, and those forms are produced, from which arise the diversified and coherent system of the universe." It was also a doctrine of this philosopher, that there is in matter a necessary, but blind and refractory force; hence giving a propensity in matter to disorder and deformity, which is the origin of evil. On this subject Plato writes with great obscurity; he appears to have thought that matter from its nature resists the will of the Supreme, and that this is the cause of the mixture of good and evil in the natural world; he speaks of it as "an innate propensity to disorder," and says, "that before nature was adorned with its present beautiful forms, it was inclined to confusion and deformity; and that from this inclination arises all the evil which happens in the world." "It cannot be," he adds, "that evil should be destroyed, for there must always be something contrary to good." Again, "God wills as far as it is possible every thing good, and nothing evil."

In the system of this philosopher the principle opposite to matter, is God; he taught that there is an intelligent cause, which is the origin of all spiritual being, and the author of the material world. The nature of this great Being he pronounced it difficult to discover, and when discovered, impossible to divulge. The existence of God he inferred from the marks of intelligence, which appear in the form and arrangement of bodies in the visible world; and from the unity of the material system he concluded, that the mind by which it was formed must be one. God, according to Plato, is the Supreme intelligence; incorporeal, without beginning, end, or change; in his nature simple, uncircumscribed in space, the author of all regulated motion, and possessed of intelligence in the highest perfection. He also ascribed to the Deity power and wisdom sufficient for the formation and preservation of the world, and believed him possessed of goodness, which inclined him to desire, and so far as the refractory nature of matter would permit, to produce the happiness of the world. This Supreme Being he distinguished by the appellation of *το Αγαθον*, "the good." He frequently speaks of God under the denomination of mind, and represents him as the cause of all things.

Plato regarded ideas as the only permanent substances, and visible things as fleeting shades: the former he conceived to be the proper objects of science to a mind raised by divine contemplation, above the perpetually varying scenes of the material world. His opinions on this subject are beautifully expressed in a passage of his Republic, in which he compares the state of the human mind, with regard to the material and intellectual world, to that of a man, who, in a cave into which no light can enter but by a single passage, views upon a wall opposite to the entrance the shadows of external objects, and mistakes them for realities. So deeply was the imagination of Plato impressed with this conception,

over desire, and afford the mind every opportunity for abstract contemplation.

From passages in his writings, it appears, that his moral doctrines were as follows—Our highest good consists in the contemplation and knowledge of the first good, which is mind, or God. All those things which are called good by men, are in reality such, only so far as they are derived from the first and highest good. The only power in human nature which can acquire a resemblance to the Supreme is reason. The minds of philosophers are fraught with valuable treasures; and, after the death of the body, they shall be admitted to divine entertainments; so that whilst with the gods, they are employed in exploring the paths of truth, they will look down with contempt upon the folly of those who are content with earthly shadows.—That only which is becoming is good; therefore virtue is to be pursued for its own sake; and because it is a divine attainment, it cannot be taught, but is the gift of God. He alone who has attained knowledge of the first good is happy; the end of which is to render man as like to God as the condition of human nature will permit. This likeness consists in prudence, justice, sanctity, and temperance. Virtue is the most perfect habit of mind, which adorns man, and renders him firm, resolute, and consistent in action and speech, in solitude, and in society. The passions are motions of the soul excited by some apparent good or evil; they originate in the irrational parts of the soul, and must be regulated and subdued by reason. Friendship is reciprocal benevolence, which inclines each party to be as solicitous for the welfare of the other as for his own; this equality of affection is created and preserved by a similarity of disposition and manners.

It will be admitted, that although many just and sublime sentiments are to be found in the writings of Plato, still, upon an impartial examination, his doctrines are in various

particulars defective, and in others extravagant and chimerical. The fanciful ideas which he has formed, proceeding from a romantic and enthusiastic temperament, may be ascribed to his connection with the Pythagorean school, and to the mysteries of the Egyptian priesthood. He does not appear to advantage when we compare his system with that of the simply practical morality, and noble simplicity of his preceptor, Socrates.

In the colder regions of Thrace, remote from the vanity and fickleness of Athens, a more severe system of philosophy arose, together with a school, which in later times has continued its influence on the human mind. The Peripatetic sect was founded by Aristotle, a philosopher, whose penetrating and universal genius has entitled him to lasting fame, and whose writings have been transmitted to the present day.

Aristotle flourished 350 B. C.

He was a native of Stagyra, a town of Thrace, on the bay of Strymon, subject to Philip, of Macedon, born in the first year of the 99th Olympiad, 384 B. C.; from the place of his birth, he is frequently called the Stagyræite; his father was a physician. Aristotle received the first rudiments of learning from Proxenus, of Atarna, in Mysia, of whom he always retained a respectful remembrance; in gratitude for the care bestowed on his early education, he afterwards honoured his memory with a statue, instructed his son Nicanor in the sciences, and adopted him as his heir. At the age of seventeen Aristotle went to Athens, and commenced the study of philosophy in the school of Plato; the acuteness of his apprehension and his industry soon attracted the attention of the latter, and obtained his approbation. Plato used to call him "the mind of his school," and to say when he was absent, "intellect is not here." His acquaintance with books became extensive and accurate; and, according to Strabo, he was the first person who formed a

private library. Aristotle continued in the academy till the death of Plato,¹ or to the thirty-seventh year of his age.

Upon the death of Plato, Speusippus, his nephew, succeeded him in the academy; at which Aristotle was so much displeased that he left Athens, and paid a visit to Hermias, king of the Atarnenses, who had been his friend and fellow disciple, and was received by him with the kindest regard. Here he remained three years, and during the interval diligently prosecuted his philosophical researches. At the end of this period, Hermias was taken prisoner by Memnon, a Rhodian, and sent to Artaxerxes, king of Persia, who put him to death. Upon which Aristotle placed a statue of his friend in the temple at Delphos, and from regard to his memory, married his sister, whom her brother's death had reduced to poverty and distress. He then removed to Mitylene, and after he had been there two years, Philip, of Macedon, having heard of his extraordinary abilities and merit, made choice of him as preceptor for his son Alexander, and wrote to him the following letter:

“ Philip to Aristotle, wisheth health.”

“ Be informed that I have a son, and that I am thankful to the gods, not so much for his birth, as that he was born in the same age with you: for if you will undertake the charge of his education, I assure myself, that he

¹ To express his high respect for the memory of his master, Aristotle erected a monument, on which he inscribed the following epitaph:—

*Gratus Aristoteles struit hoc altare Platoni,
Quem turbæ injustæ vel celebrare nefas.*

“ To Plato's sacred name this tomb is rear'd,
A name by Aristotle long revered!
Far hence, ye vulgar herd! nor dare to stain
With impious praise this ever hallow'd fane.”

will become worthy of his father, and of the kingdom which he will inherit."


This philosopher accepted the charge ; and in the second year of the 109th Olympiad, when Alexander was in his fifteenth year, he took up his residence in the court of Philip. He had been well instructed, not only in the doctrines of the schools, but likewise in the manners of the world, and was therefore excellently qualified for the office of preceptor to the young prince. Accordingly we find that he executed his trust so entirely to the satisfaction of Philip and Olympia, that they admitted him to their confidence, and conferred on him many acceptable marks of esteem. The king of Macedon allowed him no small share of influence in his public counsels ; and it reflects much honour upon Aristotle, that he made use of his influence with his prince for the benefit of his friends and the public, rather than for his own emolument. At his intercession, the town of Stagyra, which had fallen into decay, was rebuilt, and the inhabitants were restored to their ancient privileges. In commemoration of their obligations, and as a testimony of respect to their illustrious fellow-citizen, they instituted an annual festival called after his name. Alexander entertained such a regard for his preceptor, that he professed himself more indebted to him than to his father ; declaring that Philip had only given him life, but that Aristotle had taught him the art of living well. Besides the instruction he gave his pupil in ethics and policy, he particularly drew his attention to the works of Homer, and laboured to inspire him with a love of his poems, which animated the mind of that prince with those sentiments which afterwards led to his greatness.

On the decease of Philip, of Macedon, which took place in the first year of the 111th Olympiad, Alexander formed the design of his Asiatic expedition ; and Aristotle preferring the enjoyment of literary leisure to the prospect

of sharing with him in the glory of conquest, determined to return to Athens. His nephew, Callisthenes, remained however with that hero, and accompanied him in his expedition. After Aristotle had left his pupil, they carried on a friendly correspondence, in which the philosopher prevailed on Alexander to employ his increasing power and wealth in the service of philosophy, by furnishing him in his retirement with the means of enlarging his acquaintance with nature. Accordingly Alexander employed several thousand persons in different parts of Europe and Asia, to collect animals of various kinds, birds, and fishes, and to send them to Aristotle, who, from the information this collection afforded him, wrote fifty volumes on the history of Animated Nature, only ten of which are now extant. In the course of the Asiatic expedition, Callisthenes incurred the displeasure of Alexander by the freedom with which he censured his acts, and the aversion led to an alienation of kind feeling between Aristotle and his former pupil.

On his return to Athens, Aristotle found the academy occupied by Xenocrates; he therefore resolved to acquire the fame of a leader in philosophy, by founding a new sect in opposition to the Academy, and by teaching a system of doctrines different from that of Plato. The place which he chose for his school, was the Lyceum, already described; there he held daily conversations on subjects of philosophy, with those who attended him, walking as he discoursed; whence his followers were called Peripatetics, or walking philosophers.

Agreeably to the established practice, Aristotle had his public and secret doctrines; the former he called Exoteric, the latter Esoteric. Hence he divided his auditors into two classes; to the one he taught his public doctrine, discoursing upon logic, rhetoric, and policy; the other he instructed in the subtle disquisitions regarding existence, nature, and God. His more abstruse discourses he gave in the morning



to his select disciples; in the evening he delivered lectures to a more promiscuous auditory, when the Lyceum was open to all the young men without distinction. Aristotle continued his school for twelve years; although the superiority of his abilities, and the novelty of his doctrines created many enemies, the friendship of Alexander protected him from insult. But after the death of that great prince, which happened in the first year of the 114th Olympiad, the fire of jealousy, which had been smothered by the tenor of his power, burst out in a flame of persecution. His rivals instigated Eurymedon, a priest, to accuse him of holding and inculcating impious tenets; and of having commemorated the virtues of his wife and friend, with honours due only to the gods. He was condemned, but withdrew himself in time from the city, saying, that "as pears grew upon pear-trees, and figs upon fig-trees, so would Athenians always remain Athenians," and declaring that he would not give them an opportunity of repeating upon him the crime, which they had already committed against philosophy, in the martyrdom of Socrates. He retired with a few of his disciples to Chalcis, where he remained till his death. He left Athens in the second year of the 114th Olympiad, and died the year following, aged sixty-two, 322 B. C. Aristotle was twice married; firstly, to Pythias, sister to his friend Hermias; and after her decease to Herpilis, of Stagyræ; by his second wife he had a son named Nicomachus, to whom he addressed his *Magna Moralia*, "*Greater Morals*." Regarding his character, there are so many instances on record of his nobleness, generosity, and strength of friendship, that we are justified in presuming it to have been excellent. It has been justly remarked, that to cast reproaches on the memory of the illustrious dead, without cause, is a sort of impiety.

A catalogue of the writings of this celebrated philosopher is given by Laertius, Fabricius, and others. It appears that he wrote many books which have not been transmitted to

the present time. Few of his works were made public during his life; those remaining to us, may be classed under the heads of logic, physics, metaphysics, mathematics, ethics, rhetoric, and poetry.

The logical writings of Aristotle are the "Categories," said to have been partly taken from those of Archytus, the Pythagorean, "of the explanation of nouns and verbs," a work which explains the philosophical principles of grammar. "Analytics," including the complete doctrine of syllogism and demonstration; eight books on "Topics," or common places, from which probable arguments are to be drawn; and "Sophistic Arguments," enumerating the several species of false reasoning. These logical pieces are usually published in one volume, bearing the title of *Organon* of Aristotle. His physical writings, are, "On the Doctrine of Nature," explaining the principles and properties of natural bodies—"On the Heavens"—"On the Production and Dissolution of Natural Bodies"—"On Meteors"—"Of Animal Life"—"Physical Miscellanies"—"On the Natural History of Animals"—"On the Anatomy of Animals"—"On Plants"—"On Colours"—"On Sound"—"A Collection of Wonderful Facts"—"Against the Doctrine of Xenophanes, Zeno, and Gorgias"—"On the Winds"—"On Physiognomy"—and, "Miscellaneous Problems." His *Metaphysics* are contained in fourteen books. Under the head of *Mathematics*, are included, a "Book of Questions in Mechanics," and another, "On Incommensurable Lines." His *Doctrine of Ethics* is contained in ten books. To *Nicomachus* his son, "The Greater *Morals*," in seven books; to *Eudemus*, ascribed by some to *Theophrastus*, a book "On Virtue and Vice;" two "On *Oeconomics*," and eight "On Government." He treats in three distinct books "On the Art of Rhetoric;" and in another, "On the Art of Poetry."

The works of Aristotle passed through hazards, which

have given cause to much critical inquiry, how far some of the volumes which bear his name are genuine. He left his own writings, together with his library, to his successor, Theophrastus, who doubtless knew their value; the latter at his death bequeathed all his books to Neleus, of Scepsis; some of them were sold to Ptolemy Philadelphus, and shared the fate of the Alexandrian library. The heirs of Neleus, to secure the rest from being seized by the kings of Pergamus, under whose jurisdiction the town of Scepsis was, and who were industriously collecting a library, buried them in a subterraneous cavern, where they lay one hundred and thirty years, and suffered considerable injury. They were after this sold to Apellico, a great collector of books, who was particularly attached to the Peripatetic philosophy. Finding the manuscripts damaged by time, he had them transcribed, and injudiciously supplied from his own conjectures such passages as were become illegible. It is impossible to say how many alterations were thus introduced into the text. After the death of Apellico, Sylla at the taking of Athens in the fourth year of the 173rd Olympiad, 85 B. C., seized the library, and ordered it to be conveyed to Rome. Here Tyrannio, a grammarian, obtained permission to make use of the manuscripts, and employed amanuenses to take copies of them, which he suffered to pass out of his hands without proper correction. From these circumstances many errors have crept into the writings of Aristotle, for which he is not to blame.

Many of the subjects on which he treats are not only abstruse, and difficult of comprehension in themselves, but become more so by the manner in which he treats them; he affects sententious brevity, close periods, and concise diction; sometimes he makes use of different terms to express the same idea, and at other times annexes different ideas to the same term. His transitions are frequently so abrupt, that it is difficult for the reader to perceive the train of his

reasoning, and contradictions occur which the ingenuity of criticism has never been able to reconcile. In quoting the opinions of former philosophers, whether to examine, confirm, or refute, proper care is not taken to mark the transition from their words to his own, and it becomes doubtful whether Aristotle be giving his opinion, or reporting that of some other philosopher. There can be little doubt, that an ambitious desire of distinguishing himself above others, induced him to become the founder of a new sect; and that to increase the lustre of his system, he made use of many expedients to eclipse that of others. His object was to erect his own edifice upon the ruin of every other structure; as Lord Bacon has remarked, "Like a Turkish despot, he thought he could not reign secure unless his brethren were slain." This desire led him to become innovating rather in words than in reality; and determining to oppose his new doctrine of philosophy to more ancient tenets, many of which were founded on truth and experience, he sometimes misrepresents the opinions of others, and selects those most trifling, or easily refuted; he has recourse to uncertain principles, and vague terms, apparently in the hope that obscurity will be mistaken for novelty. Even with these imperfections, it must be admitted that many parts of his voluminous works discover profound penetration, and great strength of genius.

The philosophy of Aristotle may be divided into three branches; instrumental, theoretical, and practical. Under the first head, are included his doctrines concerning logic; under the second, his principles of physics and mathematics; and under the third, his system of ethics and policy. On logic, he tells us, that the end of it is, the discovery of truth, either probable or certain. Analytics investigate the truth by incontrovertical demonstration. Dialectics establish opinions by probable arguments. Logic, whether analytic or dialectic, searches after truth by means of

sylogisms. Syllogisms consist of propositions, and propositions of simple terms. Terms are of three kinds; homonymous, where a common word is applied to different things; synonymous, or univocal, where the meaning of the word, and the definition of the thing coincide; and paronymous, where the word only varies in case, or termination. Synonymous terms are divided into ten classes, called categories, or predicaments. Regarding demonstrative reasoning, Aristotle lays down the principle, that all disquisition producing science, rests upon some previous knowledge of the subject. Demonstration can only arise from principles which are true in themselves, and not referable to any prior truth; which involve in them by immediate consequence, the conclusion to be demonstrated; and which are clearly perceived and perfectly known.

On *Physica*. — The principles of nature are neither the similar parts of Anaxagoras, nor the atoms of Leucippus and Democritus, the sensible elements of Thales, the unity of Parmenides, the numbers of Pythagoras, nor the ideas of Plato. There must necessarily be in nature opposite principles, independent and undervived, from which all things proceed. But since from two contrary principles nothing could be produced, as they would rather destroy each other, a third is necessary to the existence of natural bodies. These three principles are, form, privation, and matter; the two former contrary to each other; the third, the common subject of both. Matter and form are the constituent principles of all things; privation enters not into their constitution, but is accidentally associated with them. All things are produced from that which exists potentially, namely, the first matter; not from that which exists actually, nor from pure nothingness. Matter is neither produced nor destroyed, but is the first infinite subject, from which things are formed, and into which they are at last resolved. Form is the nature and essence of

that part of the soul by which it understands. It is of two kinds, active and passive; the former is the efficient cause of all knowledge, the latter is that faculty by which the understanding receives the form of things; it is the seat of the species. The nature of the first principle of animal life and of perception, intelligence, and action, Aristotle, like all the other philosophers, was unable to explain; having no other way of judging concerning it, than by observing its operations so far as they are subjects of experience, he could only define the mind to be that principle by which we live, perceive, and understand. From his writings we are unable to draw a decided conclusion, whether he believed the soul to be mortal, or immortal; the former, however, appears probable from his opinion of the nature and origin of the soul, which he conceived to be an intellectual power, externally transmitted into the human body from an eternal intelligence, the common source of rationality to human beings; and there is no proof that he supposed the union of this principle to continue with any one after death.

On the subject of morals he seems to have taught, that true felicity consists neither in the pleasures of the body, nor in riches; in civil glory, power, rank, nor even in the contemplation of truth; but in the virtuous exercise of the mind; a virtuous life being in itself a source of delight. External goods, such as friends, riches, power, beauty, and the like, are instruments by means of which illustrious deeds may be performed. Virtue is either theoretical, or practical; the first, consists in a due exercise of the understanding; the second, in the pursuit of what is right and good; the latter, is acquired by habit and exercise. Virtue, so far as it respects ourselves and the government of the passions, consists in preserving that medium in all things which reason and prudence prescribe; it is the middle path between two extremes, one being vicious through excess, the other through defect. The first virtue is fortitude, which is the medium

between timidity and rash confidence. Temperance is the medium between the excessive pursuit and the neglect of pleasure. Liberality is the medium between prodigality and avarice. Magnificence preserves a due decorum in great expences, and is the medium between haughty grandeur and low parsimony. Magnanimity respects the love of applause, and the judgment a man forms of his own merit, and holds the middle place between meanness of spirit and pride. Modesty is a certain apprehension of incurring disgrace, and lies between impudence and bashfulness. Equity corrects the rigour of law, or supplies its defect. Friendship is closely allied to virtue; it is cherished by mutual acts of generosity; begun in kindness, preserved by concord, its end is the pleasant enjoyment of life. Pleasures are essentially different in kind. Disgraceful pleasures are wholly unworthy of the name. The purest and noblest pleasure is that which a man derives from virtuous actions. Happiness consists in a conduct conformable to virtue, and is either contemplative or active. Contemplative happiness, consists in the pursuit of knowledge and wisdom, and is superior to active happiness, because the understanding is the higher part of human nature, the objects on which it is employed being of the noblest kind. The happiness which arises from external possessions, is inferior to that arising from virtuous actions; but both are necessary to produce perfect felicity.

On comparing the merits of Aristotle, with those of the two great philosophers who preceded him, Socrates and Plato, we find that he must yield to the former in practical morality, and to the latter in the sublime ideas which he entertained of the great first Cause. It is in his extensive knowledge of natural history; his critical writings, such as his poetics, and the art of rhetoric, that the profound learning, taste, and judgment of Aristotle appear. In these he stands confessedly superior, and may justly be considered the most learned man of an accomplished people.

Out of the Socratic school other sects arose of less importance than the Academic and Peripatetic; these were the Cynic, Stoic, Epicurean, and Sceptic.

Antisthenes, the founder of the Cynic philosophy, was born at Athens, about the 90th Olympiad, 420 B. C. In his youth he was engaged in the military service of his country, and displayed his valour at the battle of Tanæa. He first studied under the Sophist Gorgias, who instructed him in the art of rhetoric; becoming dissatisfied with the futile labours of this school, he sought for more substantial wisdom by attending Socrates. Whilst he was a disciple of this great man, he showed his propensity towards severity of manners by the meanness of his dress. He frequently appeared in a threadbare and ragged cloak. Socrates, who had much penetration in discovering the characters of men, observing that Antisthenes took pains rather to expose than conceal the shabby state of his dress, said to him, "Why so ostentatious? through your rags I see your vanity." After the death of Socrates, when all good men were lamenting his fate, and indignant against his persecutors, Antisthenes, by a seasonable sarcasm, hastened the deserved punishment of Melitus and Anytus. Meeting with several young men from Pontus, who had come to Athens, with the design of attending Socrates, whose fame had reached their country, he publicly introduced them to Anytus, the leather-dresser, assuring them that he far exceeded Socrates in wisdom. This bitter encomium inflamed beyond bearing the resentment of the Athenians, who happened to be present, against these wretches who had brought such infamy upon their city. The consequences rapidly followed, Melitus was executed, and Anytus fled into banishment to avoid the same fate.

During the time that Plato, and other disciples of Socrates, were after his decease forming schools in Athens, Antisthenes chose for his place of instruction the public ground

of exercise without the walls of the city, called the Cynosargum, or, the temple of the white dog; whence some writers derive the name of the sect of which he was the founder. Others suppose that his followers were called Cynics, from the snarling humour of their master. This philosopher, judging it more consonant to the spirit of the Socratic school, to adhere in practice to the precepts of morality which Socrates had taught, than to prosecute the subtle disquisitions in which many of his followers engaged, he inculcated both by precept and example a rigorous discipline. To accommodate his manners to his doctrine, he wore only a coarse cloak, suffered his beard to grow, and carried a wallet and staff like a wandering beggar. Renouncing the luxuries of life, he contented himself with the most simple diet, and refrained from every kind of effeminate indulgence. In his discourses, he censured the manners of the age, with a degree of harshness which procured him the surname of the dog. He expressed the utmost contempt for pleasure, accounting it an evil, and saying, that he would rather be mad than addicted to a voluptuous style of living. Towards the close of his life, the gloomy cast of his mind, and the moroseness of his temper, rendered him troublesome to his friends, and an object of ridicule to his enemies. In his last illness he was fretful and tired of life, but loth to die; and on Diogenes asking him whether he needed a friend, he replied, "Where is the friend that can free me from my pain?" The former presented him with a dagger, saying, "let this free you;" to which Antisthenes answered, "I wish to be freed from pain, not from life." Neither his doctrines, nor his manners were sufficiently inviting to obtain him many followers. He paid little respect either to the gods, or to the religion of his country, but as might be expected from a pupil of Socrates, he thought justly of the Supreme Being. In his book which treats on physics, Cicero says, he observes, that "the gods of the people are many, but the god of nature is only one." Antisthenes wrote

several works, of which none are extant, excepting two declamations under the names of Ajax and Ulysses.

Diogenes, the pupil of Antisthenes, was born in the third year of the 91st Olympiad, 414 B. C., at Sinope, a city of Pontus. On his visiting Athens, he soon found in his preceptor a disposition similar to his own. When he offered himself as a pupil, however, the philosopher happening to be in a peevish humour, lifted up his staff to drive him away; upon which Diogenes said, "beat me as you please. I will be your scholar." Antisthenes, overcome by his perseverance, received him, and afterwards made him his intimate friend and companion. Diogenes completely adopted the principles and character of his master. He wore a coarse cloak, carried a wallet and a staff; made the porticos, and other public places his habitation, and depended upon casual contributions for his daily bread. A friend, whom he had desired to procure him a cell, not executing his order so soon as he expected, he is said to have taken up his abode in a tub, or large open vessel, in the Metroum. It is probable, even if this be true, that it was only a temporary expression of indignation and contempt; as Epictetus, who discourses at large concerning Diogenes, and relates many particulars respecting his manner of life, does not mention it; neither is any notice taken of it by other ancient writers; although it has been ridiculed by Juvenal, Seneca, and Lucian: the story may be ranked among the numerous tales, which have been invented to bring contempt on the Cynic sect.

It cannot be doubted, however, that Diogenes practised the greatest self-control, exposing himself to the extremes of heat and cold, and living upon the simplest diet, casually supplied by the hand of charity. That he might accomplish the intentions of his sect, the correction of luxurious and profligate manners, he reprehended the Athenians, especially those of the higher ranks, with freedom and sternness. His reproofs, though exceedingly pungent, discovered so

much ingenuity, that they commanded the admiration even of those against whom they were immediately directed. He inculcated patience of labour, and pain, frugality, temperance, and a contempt of pleasure. His rigid discipline, whilst it procured respect and admiration from some, brought upon him contempt and indignity from others. He appeared alike indifferent to both, and at all times preserved an entire command of himself. It is stated, that Diogenes, when approaching to old age, sailed to the island of *Ægina*, and upon his passage was taken by pirates, who carried him to *Crete*, and there exposed him for sale in the public market. When the auctioneer asked him what he could do, he replied, "I can govern men, therefore sell me to one who wants a master." *Xeniades*, a rich *Corinthian*, passing by at the instant, was struck with the singularity of the reply, and purchased him. When he was delivered to his master, he said, "I shall be more useful to you as your physician than as your slave." On their arrival at *Corinth*, *Xeniades* remarking the singular character and genius of his new slave, gave him his liberty; and at length, committed to him the education of his children, and the direction of his domestic concerns. Diogenes executed his trust with so much judgment and fidelity, that *Xeniades* used to say, that the gods had sent a good genius into his house. He trained up his pupils in the discipline of the *Cynic* sect, and took great pains to give them lessons of self-command, without neglecting to instruct them in moral wisdom; for this purpose he chiefly made use of sententious maxims written in verse by himself, which he required them to commit to memory. He also allowed them the use of athletic exercises and hunting. The young men were so well pleased with their preceptor, that they not only treated him with much respect, but recommended him to the attentive kindness of their parents. Diogenes during this period of his life frequently attended the assemblies of the people at the *Craneum*, a place of exercise in the

vicinity of Corinth, and at the Isthmian games; where he appeared in the character of a public censor, and after his usual manner, severely lashed the follies of the times, and inculcated lessons of rigid sobriety and virtue. It was at one of these assemblies, that the celebrated conference between Alexander the Great and this philosopher is said to have happened. The story as related upon the authority of Plutarch is—That Alexander, at this general assembly, received the congratulations of all ranks, on being appointed after the death of his father, to command the general army of the Greeks on their intended expedition against the Persians. The young prince, who was not unacquainted with the character of Diogenes, expressed his surprise that whilst other philosophers were ready on this occasion to pay him respect, Diogenes, who resided at Corinth, was absent. Curious to see a philosopher who had given so signal a proof of the haughty independence of his spirit, Alexander visited the Craneum, where he found the Cynic sitting in his tub in the sun. From the midst of a numerous crowd of attendants, the king came up to him, and said, “I am Alexander the Great.” The philosopher, without at all relaxing his surly humour, immediately replied, “And I am Diogenes the Cynic.” Alexander then requested, that he would inform him, if there were any service that he could render him: “Yes,” said the other, “not to stand between me and the sun.” Charmed with the magnanimity exhibited in this reply, Alexander turned to his courtiers, who were ridiculing the singularity of the Cynic, and said, “If I were not Alexander I would be Diogenes.” The narrative is too interesting to be omitted; there are however various circumstances which diminish its credibility. It supposes Diogenes to live in his tub in the Craneum of Corinth, whereas he lived in the house of Xeniaades; and if he ever dwelt in a tub, he left it behind him at Athens. Alexander was at this period scarcely twenty years old, and could not call himself great, for he did not receive that title

till his Persian and Indian expeditions, after which he never returned to Greece. At the same time it is probable, that Diogenes, who at the beginning of the 111th Olympiad, when Alexander held the general assembly of the Greeks, was upwards of seventy years old, might frequently appear in the public walks of Corinth; and that Alexander, wishing to see a man so celebrated, should for this purpose visit him in his usual public station; nor is it unlikely that the Cynic, to show his indifference to kingly dignity, might treat him in a manner similar to the one related above. This philosopher died at Corinth, of decay of nature, on the same day with Alexander the Great, in the first year of the 114th Olympiad, 324 B. C., in the ninetieth year of his age. His friends contended for the honour of defraying the expences of his funeral, but the magistrates of Athens settled the dispute, by ordering him an honourable interment at the public expence. A column of Parian marble, terminated by the figure of a dog, was raised over his tomb, and his friends erected many brazen statues out of respect to his memory.

Diogenes did not leave behind him any system of philosophy. After the example of his master, he was more attentive to practical than theoretical wisdom. The chief heads of his moral doctrines may be thus briefly stated. Virtue of mind, as well as strength of body, is chiefly to be acquired by exercise and habit. Nothing can be accomplished without labour, and every thing may be accomplished with it. Even the contempt of pleasure may, by the force of habit, become pleasant. All things are good to wise men, to whom the gods are friends. Laws are necessary in a civilized nation, but the happiest condition of human life is that which approaches to a state in which all are equal, and virtue is the only ground of distinction. The end of philosophy is to subdue the passions, and prepare men for every condition of life.

The following maxims and apothegms have been ascribed to him. Diogenes treading upon Plato's robe, said, "I trample under feet the pride of Plato." "Yes," said Plato, "with greater pride of your own." Being asked in what part of Greece he had seen good men, he answered, "no where; at Sparta I have seen good boys." To a friend who advised him in old age to indulge himself, he said, "would you have me quit the race, when I have almost reached the goal?" Observing a boy drink water out of the hollow of his hand, he took his cup out of his wallet, and threw it away, saying that he would carry no superfluities about him. Plato having defined man to be a two-legged animal without wings, Diogenes plucked off the feathers from a cock, and turned him into the academy, crying out, "see Plato's man!" In reply to a rich individual, who asked him at what time he ought to dine, he said, "if you are a rich man, when you will; if you are poor, when you can." Being asked what countryman he was, he answered, "a citizen of the world." To one that reviled him, he said, "no one will believe you when you speak ill of me, any more than they would me, if I were to speak well of you." Hearing one of his friends lament that he should not die in his country, he said, "be not uneasy; from every place there is a passage to the regions below." "Would you be revenged on your enemy?" said this philosopher, "be virtuous, that he may have nothing to say against you."

The Stoic sect was a branch of the Cynic, the extreme austerity of the latter producing the apathy of the former; although the real design of the fathers of both sects appears to have been, to establish virtuous manners. The founder of the Stoics, whilst he avoided the offensive singularity of the Cynics, retained the spirit of their moral doctrine; and from a diligent comparison of the tenets of other masters, he formed a new system of speculative philosophy.

Zeno flourished 327 B. C.

This philosopher, the father of the Stoic sect, was a native of Cittium, a maritime town of Cyprus, and was born 362 B. C.; this place having been originally peopled by a colony of Phœnicians. Zeno is sometimes called the Phœnician. His father was a merchant, but observing in his son a strong propensity to learning, he early devoted him to philosophy. At thirty years of age Zeno visited Athens, and in the first instance studied under Crates, the Cynic; but though he admired the spirit of that school, he could not reconcile himself to their peculiar manners. Besides, his inquisitive turn of mind would not allow him to adopt that indifference to scientific inquiry, which was one of the characteristic distinctions of that sect; he therefore attended other preceptors, who professed to teach their pupils the nature and causes of things, Stilpo, Xenocrates, and Diodorus Cronus. By the latter he was instructed in dialectics. At last, after attending many other masters, he offered himself as a disciple to Polemo, who appears to have been aware, that Zeno's intention, in thus removing from one school to another, was to collect materials for a new system of his own; for when he joined his class, he said to him, "I am not a stranger, Zeno, to your Phœnician arts; I perceive that your design is to creep slyly into my garden, and steal away my fruit." Polemo was not mistaken. Having made himself master of the tenets of others, Zeno determined to become the founder of a new sect. The place which he made choice of for his school was named the poecile, or painted porch; a public portico so called, from the pictures of Polygnotus, and other eminent painters with which it was adorned. It was from this circumstance, that the followers of this philosopher were called Stoics.

Zeno taught a strict system of morals, and exhibited a pleasing picture of virtue in his own life. He excelled in

that kind of subtle reasoning, which was at the time popular; it is therefore not surprising that he obtained the applause and regard of numerous followers, and enjoyed the favour of the great. Antigonus Gonates, king of Macedon, during his residence at Athens, attended his lectures, and, upon his return, earnestly invited him to his court. Zeno possessed so highly the esteem and confidence of the Athenians, that on account of his integrity they deposited the keys of their citadel in his hands; they also honoured him with a golden crown, and a statue of brass. Among his own countrymen he was likewise much respected and admired. This philosopher lived to the extreme age of ninety-eight, and at last, in consequence of an accident, voluntarily put an end to his life. As he was walking out of his school, he fell down, and broke one of his fingers; which so affected him with a consciousness of infirmity, that striking the earth, he said, "Why am I thus importuned? I obey thy summons;" and went home, and strangled himself. He died in the first year of the 129th Olympiad, 264 B.C.

When this philosopher resolved for the purpose of establishing a school, to desert the doctrines of Pythagoras and Plato, in which he had been instructed by Xenocrates and Polemo, it became necessary either to invent new opinions, or to give an air of novelty to old systems, by the introduction of different terms and definitions; of these two plans Zeno prudently made choice of the easier. Cicero says, concerning him, "that he had little reason for deserting his masters, especially those of the Platonic school; and that he was not so much an inventor of new opinions, as of new terms."¹

¹ The thorny contentions about words, of Zeno and his followers, are thus ridiculed by a comic poet quoted by Athenæus :

Ye sages of the Porch, loquacious tribe,
Traders in trifles, arbiters of words,
And censors ! hear !

That this was the real character of his philosophy, will clearly appear from a perusal of the accurate comparison, which Cicero has drawn between the doctrines of the Academy and those of the Stoics, in his academic questions. The dialectic arts which Zeno learned in the school of Diodorus Cronus, he applied to the support of his own system; and into which he transferred almost without alloy the moral doctrines of the Cynics; with this principal difference, that whilst the Cynics disdained the cultivation of nature, the Stoics affected to rise above it. On the subject of Physics, Zeno copied from Pythagoras and Heraclitus, through the channel of the Platonic school. He believed all nature, and God himself as the soul of the universe, to be regulated by fixed and immutable laws; the soul being a portion of the divinity, man cannot complain of being actuated by that necessity which actuates the Deity himself. His pains and pleasures are determined by the same laws, which control his existence. Virtue consists in accommodating the disposition of the mind to the immutable laws of nature; vice in opposing those laws; the latter, therefore, becomes folly, and the former the only true wisdom. A beautiful description of the Stoic philosophy will be found in the *Enchiridion* of Epictetus, and in the meditations of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus.

The Epicurean sect took its name from its founder Epicurus, who was born near Gargettus, in the vicinity of Athens, at the beginning of the third year of the 109th Olympiad, 342 B. C., and died in the second year of the 127th Olympiad, and the seventy-second year of his age. He taught that man's supreme happiness consisted in pleasure; he himself limited the term, so as to make it apply only to the practice of virtue; others of his followers, however, made it consist in intemperance and luxury. This philosopher held that the Deity was indifferent to the actions of men; they therefore had no other counsellor

than their own conscience, and no guide than the instinctive desire of their own happiness; doctrines certainly not calculated to keep his followers in the paths of virtue and morality.

The Sceptic sect was founded by Pyrrho, a native of Elea, who flourished about the 110th Olympiad, 340 B.C. and died about the ninetieth year of his age. He was originally brought up to the art of painting, but left it for the study of philosophy. Pyrrho was a disciple of Anaxarchus and accompanied him in the train of Alexander to India. Here he conversed with the Brahmins and Gymnosophists and every advance which he made appears to have involved him in uncertainties; he therefore formed no system of his own, but endeavoured to weaken the foundations of others. He inculcated universal doubt as the only true wisdom. There was in the opinion of his followers no essential difference between vice and virtue, farther than as human compact had discriminated them. Tranquillity of mind was considered to be the state of the greatest happiness, which was to be obtained by a perfect indifference to all dogmas or opinions.

The author will conclude the highly interesting subject of philosophy, with some observations on the character of the founders of that science in Greece. History has already considered in a preceding chapter, has been well defined as "philosophy teaching by example." The improvements of modern days, with our more exact and extended knowledge, may induce a smile at some of the theoretical speculations of Grecian philosophy; such feeling however, if it exist, will soon give way to that of admiration and respect, for that depth of talent and profound contemplation, which laid the foundation of subsequent and more perfect systems. When we turn our attention to the conduct of Anaxagoras, Socrates, Plato

Aristotle, and other illustrious men of this class, it is difficult to conceive any thing more touchingly beautiful than the picture it presents. We behold them careless of wealth, regardless of power, content with the simplest necessities, devoting their lives to the instruction and improvement of their fellow men; their whole time occupied in inculcating lessons of wisdom, with principles of virtue, and the greatest of them falling a glorious martyr to the superior excellence of his doctrines. When we reflect on the shortness of human life, that seventy or eighty years close our term of residence on earth, and know that thousands of the highest in rank, and greatest in wealth, have passed along the stage of existence as a tale that is told, and after the lapse of a few short weeks, or if more fortunate, of a few months, as a tale forgotten by the busy crowd; when we remember that upwards of two thousand years are gone since the death of these great men; nevertheless that their names are in our mouths as household words; that of the rays of glory which surround their memory, not one of them has become less bright in the vast lapse of ages; and that we are still ready to accord to them our sympathy, our respect, our admiration, while we cling to them from the feeling that they have ennobled and dignified our common nature; it must be admitted that their recompence has been sublimely great. Vast indeed is the range of opinion among mankind, of what constitutes happiness; the poor negro, who sits idly all day on a rock, without a thought, may by some be considered happy; but the philosopher, who through the aid of science, scans heaven and earth, and whose mind enters into the sublime idea of Plato, that his soul is a veritable part of the great first cause himself, gains by his resplendent intellect the admiration of posterity, and his name becomes immortal.

Such contemplations are highly important, as valuable deductions can be drawn from them. They teach us that the immortality of true greatness commences in this world,

and that when it ends in time, it continues in eternity. Let us ask ourselves, shall any of the present generation be remembered with respect and esteem, at the end of two thousand years? Is there a probability that we may be of that number? the heart glows at the supposition of such a recompense. On the other hand, shall we pass away, and lie down as a clod of the valley, to be no more remembered than a grain of sand, among the myriads on the sea-shore? It is by reflections such as these attuning the mind to a more noble course of thought, that men of genius rise superior to the calamities of the world; they burst asunder the cords of ignorance and folly, which bind down our thinking powers from the cradle to the grave; and which have heretofore prevented the masses of human beings either from thinking justly, or acting rationally. Happy would it be for mankind were princes and rulers imbued with a spirit of philosophy. It would point out to them the evils which degrade humanity, while it taught them a remedy. It would show them that ignorance and poverty are those evils; the former by fettering the mental faculties, the latter by paralyzing the physical powers; it would demonstrate to them that education is the remedy for the one, and judicious industry for the other. It would teach them the responsibilities of their station, and lead them to discover that there are respective duties and obligations on both sides; and that in conferring happiness on others, they were adopting the surest means to secure it for themselves. There is only one description of rivalry which ought to exist between a government, and its established religion, on such a momentous question, as a system of general education, namely, that of which of the two shall do the most good. The rays of wisdom appear to be endeavouring to penetrate the dark clouds of ignorance and prejudice; let us hope that the time is not far distant, when these clouds will disappear before the noon-day sun of knowledge.

CHAPTER XIV.

ORATORS OF GREECE.

LYSIAS, ISOCRATES, ÆSCHINES, AND DEMOSTHENES.

Eloquence among the Greeks appears to have been studied, and called into action at an early period. It was the opinion of Cicero, that the art of public speaking was in esteem anterior to the siege of Troy. Of the eloquence which belongs to poetry, many monuments exist in Homer; but that which was actually efficacious was exercised in public discussions on affairs of state. In Athens it attained its highest perfection, and the age of Pericles so remarkable in other respects, was that in which it flourished. Gorgias,¹ of Leontium, in Sicily, was the first who taught the art methodically; he was followed by Isocrates, the preceptor of Xenophon and Demosthenes. Almost every statesman became an orator, for it was impossible to take an active or influential part in the government without eloquence. Harangues were generally addressed to the people; and as the object usually was to excite, rather than to convince, they were more impassioned than ratiocative. On important occasions the Athenians could, and did listen to argument; consequently Demosthenes frequently succeeded against his opponents. The perfect liberty which every citizen had of delivering his opinions, maintained a succession of orators during the period of Athenian prosperity; the later however, were in general more argumentative than the earlier speakers. The eloquence of Greece must be considered as more impassioned and imaginative than that of modern nations.

¹ He was sent by his countrymen to solicit the assistance of the Athenians against the Syracusans, 417 B. C. He was successful in his embassy.

Lysias flourished 429 B. C.

This orator was born at Athens, 459 years before the Christian era. His father Cephalus, a native of Syracuse, was persuaded by his friend Pericles, then at the head of the Athenian republic, to quit his native country, and fix his residence in Athens. He wisely availed himself of the opportunities he enjoyed in that city, to give his son the rudiments of a good education. Lysias, at the age of fifteen, accompanied Herodotus into Italy, when the Athenians formed their settlement at Thurium. He continued thirty-two years in that colony; the affairs of which were managed with such prudence that it soon exhibited a lively picture of the mother country. Towards the conclusion of the Peloponnesian war, the fortune of Athens having begun to decline, Thurium and other colonies, prepared to throw off the yoke; and Lysias, with such Athenians as remained attached to the interests of the parent state, returned home.

The misfortunes which now attended the Athenian enterprises, the fatal issue of the war of the Peloponnesus, and the usurpation of the thirty tyrants, afforded little opportunity to this orator, who had cultivated the arts of peace, to display his abilities in the service of his country. During his residence at Thurium, he studied eloquence under the best masters; but after his return, his attention appears to have been directed principally to commerce and manufactures. He and his brother Polemarchus, employed an hundred and twenty slaves in making shields; and they were considered among the richest foreigners who resided at Athens. Their wealth exposed them to the cruelty of the thirty tyrants.¹ Polemarchus was first put to death, and Lysias narrowly escaped a similar fate. In those orations

¹ When Athens was obliged to surrender at the close of the Peloponnesian war, and pull down her walls, the thirty tyrants were placed over her by Lacedæmon.

which have come down to us, it is natural that he should discover the utmost aversion to that tyranny which so nearly cost him his life, and he never ceases to celebrate the merit of those patriots by whom it was subverted. Indeed he took a distinguished part in effecting this revolution, as he hired not less than three hundred soldiers at his own expense, who joined the forces collected by Thrasybulus, and assisted in re-establishing the democracy.

It is from this era that we are to consider Lysias as an orator, for we have none of his discourses of an earlier date, and several of them were written twenty years afterwards. He seldom appeared before the senate, or assembly, but having opened a school for teaching eloquence, he employed himself chiefly in writing accusations or defences at the desire of such persons, as had occasion either to impeach the conduct of others, or to defend their own. According to Plutarch, there were in his time four hundred and seventy-five orations said to have been written by Lysias; of which Dionysius, of Halicarnassus, affirmed only two hundred and thirty to be genuine. It appears that he also composed other works; of all his writings however, there are only thirty-four orations extant, and several of them are so mutilated and imperfect, as scarcely to deserve attention. The ancients had a high opinion of the talents of this orator—Cicero describes him as almost perfect—Dionysius, of Halicarnassus, says, that he brought to perfection that graceful simplicity of writing¹ which is equally agreeable and persuasive. Quintilian and Longinus propose him as a model of pure Attic taste; and Plutarch honours him with a more valuable panegyric, when he tells us, that of all the orations Lysias composed, only two failed in producing the effect intended by them. He died at Athens in the eighty-third year of his age.

¹ We have seen that he offered a written defence to Socrates, which the philosopher declined.

The more important of his orations are, "A Defence of Callias accused of Sacrilege." The accusers were his own slaves, and the discourse contains a description of the hatred and malevolence this class commonly discovered against their masters; being in general more ready to procure their freedom, by their destruction, than as a reward for their services. "An accusation against Andocides for impiety."—During the Peloponnesian war, this person had been accused of mutilating the statues and ridiculing the worship of the gods; being cast into prison, in order to escape death, he informed against a number of his friends, pretending that they were accessory to his crime. They were condemned to suffer a capital punishment, and Andocides was set at liberty. "In defence of an Athenian who had been ill-treated by his acquaintance, and as an answer to their reproaches." This oration proves how much the Athenians were given to detraction and resentment, although at the same time warm in their friendships. "Against Epicrates and his companions in the embassy."—This shows, that the managers of the public revenue at Athens seldom lost an opportunity of embezzling it; that parties entrusted with important commissions by the republic, were often bribed by its enemies to betray the interests of their country; and that the source from which these inconveniences flowed, was the irregular administration of justice in the courts, from the influence of the friends of the accused. "An accusation against Ergocles for extorting money from the allies of Athens."—It exhibits the abuse of power by the corruption of the republican party, who, after driving out the thirty tyrants, and establishing a democracy, levied contributions on free cities, and harassed the citizens: and when complaints were brought against them to the Athenian assembly, and their fellow-citizens began to talk of calling them to account for their injustice, aided each other to an extent of profligacy which threatened destruction to the state; Ergocles having advised his friend Thrasybulus, to provide for his safety by

carrying off the gallees entrusted to him, to render himself master of Byzantium, and then marry the daughter of Seuthes, a barbarous prince who lived in that neighbourhood.

In a funeral oration, written by Lysias "in praise of the Athenian citizens, who fell in assisting the Corinthians, during their war with Lacedæmon," he commences thus—"If it were within the reach of eloquence to do justice to the merit of those who lie here interred, the state doubtless would be blamable in allowing to the orators only a few days for their preparation. But since it is impossible to compose a discourse adequate to so glorious a theme, I must rather admire the penetration of our magistrates, who, by assigning a short time for the execution of a task which could never be completely accomplished, have thus endeavoured to save the reputation of the speakers,¹ and to shield them from a multitude² of reproaches. It is my ambition therefore to rival, not the glory which your warriors have acquired, but the eloquence with which your orators have displayed it. The actions of the former afford a subject of panegyric which all the praises of the latter can never fully exhaust; in every age, over sea and land, wherever mankind, subject to calamity and affliction, stand in need of tender sympathy and generous assistance, the virtues of the humane and the brave will be admired, their exploits will be recorded, and their name and glory will remain. But before I endeavour to do justice to such as have lately aspired at so distinguished a renown, I must, according to custom, relate the ancient dangers of our forefathers, not drawing my information from written record, but from venerable traditionary fame, treasured in the heart and memory of every good citizen. It is the duty of all mankind to be mindful of their ancestors, to celebrate them with odes, to extol them with panegyrics, to honour them especially on

¹ The court of Areopagus appointed the speakers, who should pronounce these funeral orations, and fixed the time for delivering them. Thucydides, book ii.

such occasions as the present, that by praising the actions of the dead, they may excite the virtues of the living." After entering at some length into an historical review of the conduct of the Athenian people, Lysias ends his oration in the following beautiful manner:—"Dying for whatever is most respectable among men, their memories never fade, their honours ever bloom, their actions remain perpetual objects of emulation and praise; and though lamented as mortal by nature, they are celebrated as immortal through virtue. They are buried at the public expence; and contests of strength, wisdom, and magnificence, are appointed in honour of them and the gods. For my part, I account them most happy; I envy them their death. Those men alone are gainers by their birth, who, though their bodies be mortal have acquired immortal renown. But, according to established practice, and the laws of our ancestors, we mourn for the persons here buried."

In another oration, "in defence of a citizen accused of being concerned in dissolving the democracy," Lysias says, "While you are inflamed by the violent speeches of incendiaries, and reflect on what you suffered while you were obliged to remain in exile, I can easily excuse you, Athenians! for confounding in the first warmth of your generous indignation, all those who continued in the city: but I cannot acquit those invidious accusers, who, neglecting their own affairs, interfere in what so little concerns them. They can well distinguish between the innocent and the guilty; and it is the sordid prospect of gaining by calumny and falsehood, that alone makes them persuade you to form the same opinion of men, whose characters are so unlike, and even opposite to one another." This oration affords one of the many examples of persons accused, under the democracy, of assisting to establish or support the government of the thirty tyrants. The only foundation for impeaching this citizen, appears to have been, that he had remained peaceably in Athens, and suffered no injury. This discourse also

explains the nature of the different parties into which the Athenians were divided; and shows to what an excessive pitch of insolence informers carried on their accusations, soon after the re-establishment of the democracy.

Isocrates flourished 406 B. C.

He was born in Erethea, a village of Attica, about 436 years before the Christian era. The opulence of his father Theodorus enabled him to give his son the best education, and Isocrates being intended for the management of public affairs, he was sent to study under the principal teachers of eloquence in Greece. Among his masters were Gorgias, of Leontium, Tisias, of Syracuse, and Theramenes, of Athens; all of whom, though employed in important negotiations, and invested with high offices in their several republics; in the midst of civil honours, did not disdain to cultivate and diffuse the knowledge of that art, by which they had attained them. There were two circumstances, however, which prevented Isocrates following the same career which they had pursued; the weakness of his voice, and a constitutional timidity; either of which was an obstacle to his appearing with advantage before an Athenian assembly. These defects were felt by him the more sensibly, because he had been deprived of his patrimony during the Peloponnesian war; and reduced him to the task of writing for hire, in defence of such persons as were accused in the courts of justice, an employment which created him so many enemies, that he soon thought proper to abandon it.

The profession he afterwards embraced, was attended with success. He sailed to the island of Chios, and there opened a school of rhetoric, and after his reputation became established, he transferred it to Athens. The deficiencies of voice and courage, which prevented him from making a figure in a popular assembly, left him leisure to improve his talents for composition, and for cultivating morals and politics, as best calculated for diffusing his

literary fame, the object at which he aimed. As he kept apart from those continual altercations, which agitated his countrymen, he viewed the affairs of Athens, and of Greece, through a more impartial medium than most writers of that age; and while his abilities enabled him to perceive the measures best conducive to the public good, his candour led him to propose them. Isocrates early distinguished himself by discourses addressed to private persons, written with an elegance till then unknown in the Greek tongue, and which breathed pure maxims of virtue and wisdom. The first performance however, that placed him in the conspicuous point of view in which he was regarded by his contemporaries, was his "Panegyric of Athens." From the time of this performance, which excelled all others on the same subject, his friendship was courted, not only by the first men in the Grecian republics, but also by many foreign princes. His school was frequented by the flower of the Athenian youth, and he had the honour of instructing many of those whose writings reflect lustre on the most brilliant period of that state. Demosthenes was his scholar, and acknowledged him as his superior in the art of composition.

There were not less than sixty orations extant in the days of Plutarch,¹ commonly ascribed to Isocrates. Of these only twenty-one remain. Fortunately we are deprived of none of those which he most valued. As he lived to a great age, and had educated many of the chief men, not only in Greece, but in the neighbouring states, he maintained an extensive literary correspondence with the most distinguished characters of his time. But there are only ten of his letters now remaining, nine of which are placed among his works, and the tenth addressed to Archidamus, is published in the last edition of the library of Photius. The three first are written to Philip, of Macedon,

¹ Plutarch flourished 110 years after the Christian era.

on the subject of uniting the Greeks, to lead them forth against the Persians. The fourth is merely a recommendation of its bearer, who had been one of the scholars of Isocrates, to the protection of that sovereign. The fifth is addressed to Alexander, congratulating him on his taste for literature and philosophy. The sixth is an excuse to the sons of Jason, leader of the Thessalians, for not accepting their invitation to reside with them. The seventh is a panegyric of the mild government of Timotheus, king of Heraclea. The eighth is a recommendation of Agenor, to the magistrates of Mitylene. The ninth is a fragment addressed to Dionysius, the tyrant of Syracuse, reproaching him with his pride and cruelty. The tenth to Archidamus, as already mentioned.

Isocrates was considered as a writer of the first rank. Plato says that Socrates spoke of him thus: "Isocrates is still young, but he has too much genius to be compared with Lysias, he shows a greater love for virtue, and I should not be surprised, as his knowledge increases with his years, if he excel all those in the same path of literature." Cicero celebrates him as very superior to those who had gone before him, and as still unrivalled in the graces of oratory. Quintilian expresses a high opinion with regard to his talents, and praises him for having consecrated them to the cause of virtue. Dionysius, of Halicarnassus, has left us a long criticism on the works of this orator; he particularly admires those sound maxims of conduct, and principles of political wisdom, which are discoverable in them, and this is the light in which they ought always to be viewed. He wrote several of his discourses at a very advanced age; the Panathenæan he did not finish till he was ninety-seven, about two years before his death. In his "Panegyric of Athens," he says, in the true spirit of a sincere lover of literature, "I have always thought it remarkable that the lawgivers who instituted our public games,

and established our general assemblies, should have appointed prizes of no small value for the combatants who excel in feats of bodily strength and address, while they allowed the talents of men of genius to languish without encouragement. Yet if the qualities most beneficial to others be the best entitled to their regard, the accomplishments of the mind ought to be preferred before all other advantages. The wrestler may increase his own activity, the racer may redouble his speed; but neither of them can transfer any share of these excellencies to another: for the powers of the body can never be communicated; but the wisdom of the sage diffuses itself through all society. His writings carry light and improvement every where along with them; and all who have minds open to receive the instructions, may reap from them not only the purest pleasure, but the most solid advantage. The little encouragement, therefore, that is given to literary pursuits, will never determine me to abandon them; for me their intrinsic worth will always have sufficient charms; and the glory of pronouncing a discourse by which all Greece may be benefited, will supply the place of every other reward,¹ and fully requite my labours."

In his oration, "on the peace," he commences in a style of impressive beauty, thus: "It is usual with public speakers to exaggerate the importance of their subject, and to use every art to persuade you, that above all other topics of discourse, the present deserves your most serious regard. If such a preface could ever be applied with propriety, it is surely to the matter in deliberation. We are assembled to treat of war and peace, objects of the utmost consequence, and on which the fate of human affairs in a great measure depends. Such is the dignity of the subject; but your behaviour is in no respect correspondent to it; for you

¹ It was this oration which laid the foundation of his wealth and prosperity.

listen not to the parties with candour, receiving with applause all that is said on one side of the question—you allow not the advocates for the other to raise their voice in its defence. This behaviour is neither new nor surprising; you are accustomed to reject with disdain whatever does not gratify your passions; and to receive without examination whatever concurs with your desires; your conduct in these respects has long been the object of satire; for no people know better than you, the unhappy effects of flattery. How many families of distinction have you seen reduced to beggary by a herd of parasitical attendants? And how contemptible do those appear, who in private life become a prey to such seducers? But in your public conduct you imitate their example, and repose more confidence in those who flatter you, than in all the rest of the citizens.” There are few works extant which afford a more complete and satisfactory view of the politics of Greece at this period, than the description which is given in the oration “on the peace.”

In his speech “on reforming the government of Athens,” Isocrates observes, “Many will think it remarkable, that in the present posture of affairs, I should have intimated the necessity of deliberating on the state of the republic. Where is the danger? what calamity threatens? can our affairs be more prosperous? have we not an hundred ships of war? secure by land, unrivalled at sea; are there not many allies ready to take arms in our cause, and numerous states which regularly pay us their contributions, and acknowledge their dependence? In such a favourable situation what have we to dread? It becomes our enemies alone to deliberate about safety. While you are guided by such principles of reasoning, you must necessarily condemn as useless, the task which I have undertaken, and continue to flatter yourselves, that by means of your superior resources and present power, all Greece will speedily be subjected to

your dominion. But this power and these resources, form the principal ground of my apprehensions; for the more advantageous the circumstances of any people are, the more pernicious are the measures to which they are inclined. Their good fortune seduces and misleads them, and their confidence betrays them into conduct which often proves fatal. Unmixed good or evil is not the lot of human nature. Wealth and power commonly bring folly in their train; and the latter is attended by licentiousness; but the usual companions of poverty¹ are wisdom and moderation; so that it is not easy to decide whether we ought to choose that our posterity should be left in poverty or affluence, for that situation which seems the most unhappy, frequently turns out the most advantageous." Again, "happiness in the opinion of our ancestors consisted neither in the splendour of processions, nor in ostentatious luxury of shows and entertainments, but in living with moderation and simplicity, and enjoying in company with their fellow-citizens all the necessaries of life. Who possessed of humanity can reflect on our present circumstances without pity, when many citizens cast lots,² before the courts of justice, to decide whether they shall enjoy the common necessaries of life; others capable of sea-service, solicit maintenance from the treasury; a third class dance in embroidered robes, and idle away the winter too foolishly to be described, and a thousand other inconsistencies take place, by which many are oppressed, and all disgraced? While the Athenians enjoyed their ancient government, they lived peaceably at home, and opposed with vigour all attacks from abroad. But at present there is no end to our civil broils, and we are so ill prepared for foreign war, that, in order to raise troops, it is necessary to bribe us. And what is the most

¹ Here Isocrates means comparative poverty, or mediocrity, and neither penury, nor want.

² This refers to the people casting lots to be appointed judges, as they were paid for judging.

important of all, at that time no citizen wanted the necessities of life, nor disgraced his country by begging subsistence from strangers; but the poor are now become the most numerous body in the state. Yet I am still of opinion that if we re-establish the form of government enjoyed by our ancestors, we may not only remove our present distress, but secure the safety of the state, and of all Greece. It is with this view that I have called the assembly, and pronounced the present discourse. Reflect on the measures there proposed, and pass that decree which may appear most expedient and useful."

Æschines flourished 342 B. C.

This orator was a contemporary and rival of Demosthenes; the first open signs of hostility between them appeared at the court of Philip, king of Macedon, where they were sent as ambassadors, but the character of Æschines is stated to have been tarnished by the acceptance of a bribe from that talented and politic sovereign, whose tyranny had hitherto been the general subject of his declamation. When the Athenians were desirous of rewarding the patriotic labours of Demosthenes with a crown of gold, Æschines impeached Ctesiphon who proposed it, for illegal conduct in doing so, although the real object was an attack on Demosthenes himself, and as Ctesiphon had grounded his decree of honour on that orator's merit towards the republic, it was the object of Æschines to show that Demosthenes was wholly unworthy not only of honour, but of public esteem; and to this accusation we are indebted for the two celebrated orations "de corona." Æschines fell before the superior eloquence of his rival, and became involved in the consequences of a groundless and malicious prosecution; unable to pay the penalty, he was obliged to submit to exile. He retired to Rhodes, and Demosthenes generously forced him on leaving Athens, to accept a considerable present in money. Æschines opened a school of eloquence at Rhodes;

here he repeated to his hearers those two orations. His own was received with approbation, that of his rival with an extravagance of applause—"How much more must you have been affected had you heard him deliver it?" said Æschines, with a noble acknowledgment of his rival's merit.

The style of Æschines as an orator, was full, diffusive, and sonorous. He was a stranger to the glowing expressions and daring figures of Demosthenes; he is less affecting, and has not so much strength and energy. To view his abilities to the utmost advantage, they must not be compared with those of his rival. His discourses will then appear to want neither beauty nor grandeur; his easy and natural manner will be thought pleasing; and a more particular attention will show that his style, although flowing and harmonious, is not deficient in force and energy. Æschines wrote three orations, and nine epistles; the former alone are extant. He died in the seventy-fifth year of his age.

In his chief oration, that against Ctesiphon, Æschines commences his address by remarking, "You see, Athenians! what forces are prepared, what numbers formed and arrayed, what soliciting through the assembly by a certain party, and all this to oppose the fair and ordinary course of justice in the state. As to me I stand here in firm reliance on the immortal gods, on the laws, and on you; convinced that faction never can have greater weight with you than law and justice. You have heard, Athenians, that the law directs, in every case where a crown is granted by the people, that the proclamation shall be made in the presence of the people, in the Pnyx, in full assembly; never in any other place. Yet Ctesiphon hath appointed proclamation to be made in the theatre; not contented that the act itself should violate our laws, he hath presumed to change the scene of it. He confers his honour not while the people are assembled, but while the new tragedies are exhi-

biting; not in the presence of the people, but of the Greeks; that they too may know on what kind of man our honours are conferred"—after bringing forward all that a bitter rivalry could suggest, the weakness and want of courage of Demosthenes at the battle of Cheronæa, not forgetting even points of mere technicality, he concludes—"You are going to crown Demosthenes with a golden crown, who did not bring in gold from Persia, but received bribes himself, and still possesses them. And can you imagine but that Themistocles, and those who fell at Marathon, and those who died at Platea, and the very sepulchres of our ancestors, must groan, if you confer a crown on this man, who united with the barbarians against the Greeks? And now bear witness for me, thou earth, thou sun, O virtue and intelligence! and thou, O erudition! which teachest us the just distinction between vice and goodness, that I have stood up, and have spoken in the cause of justice. If I have supported my prosecution with a dignity befitting its importance, I have spoken as my wishes dictated; if too deficiently, as my abilities admitted. Let what hath now been offered, and what your own thoughts must supply, be duly weighed, and pronounce such a sentence as justice, and the interests of the state demand."

Demosthenes flourished 340 B. C.

This illustrious individual, the prince of Grecian orators, was born 382 years before the Christian era. At the age of seven years he had the misfortune to lose his father, and during his minority, his guardians embezzled the greater part of his property. His education was neglected by them, and for his advances in learning, he was indebted only to his own industry and application. He became a pupil of Isæus and Plato, and also studied the orations of Isocrates. At the age of seventeen he succeeded in obtaining the restitution of a great part of his estate; his rising abilities however, were impeded by weak lungs, and a difficulty of pronun-

ciation, but these obstacles were conquered by unwearied assiduity and perseverance. His extraordinary talents as an orator raised him to consequence at Athens, and he was placed at the head of the government. In this public situation his constant exertion was to rouse his countrymen, the Athenians, against the ambition and encroachments of Philip, of Macedon; after his death, he declared himself warmly against Alexander, his son and successor; and when the Macedonians demanded of the Athenians their orators, Demosthenes met the application, by reminding them of the sheep, which were unwise enough to deliver their dogs to the wolves.

To enlarge at much length upon the abilities and character of this orator, would be to resume a subject already exhausted both by ancient and modern writers. It is sufficient to say, that the several excellencies of his countrymen were at least equalled by Demosthenes. From him critics have formed their rules, and all masters in his art have thought it an honour to imitate him. That energy and majesty are his peculiar excellencies, and that he formed a style and manner admirably fitted to his own temper and genius, as well as to that of his hearers, cannot be disputed. As many of those to whom he addressed himself were men of low rank and occupations, his images and expressions are sometimes familiar; he often contents himself with an imperfect hint, a sentence, a word, even his silence is at times pregnant with meaning; and such slight hints were highly flattering to a people who valued themselves on their acuteness and penetration. At other times his delivery was as the impetuous torrent that bears down all before it; and the repeated flashes of his eloquence like lightning spread universal terror, which the strongest eye dared not to encounter.

Demosthenes is stated to have delivered sixty-five orations, of which all that he left in writing have probably come down to us. Those extant may be divided into three

classes; firstly, the harangues to the people, including the Philippics of the first order, and also those of the second, distinguished by the name Olynthiac; secondly, the orations upon public causes, including the speech on the Crown; and thirdly, the orations on private causes.

In his reply to Æschines against Ctesiphon, "on the Crown," he begins, "In the first place, ye men of Athens, I make my prayer to all the powers of heaven, that such affection as I have invariably discovered to this state, and its citizens, you now may entertain for me upon this present trial. And what concerns you nearly, what essentially concerns your religion and your honour, is, that the gods may so dispose your minds, as to permit me to proceed in my defence, not as directed by my adversary, that would be severe indeed! but by the laws, and by your oath, in which, to all the other equitable clauses, we find this expressly added, 'each party shall have equal audience.' This imports not merely that you shall not prejudge, not merely that the same impartiality shall be shown to both of us, but still further, that the contending parties shall each be left at full liberty to arrange, and to conduct his pleading, as his choice or judgment may determine. In many instances Æschines has the entire advantage in this cause; two there are of more especial moment. In the first place, as to our interests in the contest, we are on terms utterly unequal, for they are by no means points of similar importance; for me to be deprived of your affections, and for him to be defeated in his prosecution. In the second place, such is the natural disposition of mankind, that invective and accusation are heard with pleasure; while they who speak their own praises are received with impatience. This then is the first part which commands a favourable acceptance; that which must prove offensive to every single hearer is reserved for me. If, to guard against this disadvantage, I should decline all mention of my own

actions, I know not by what means I could refute the charge, or establish my pretensions to this honour. If, on the other hand, I enter into a detail of my whole conduct, private and political, I shall be obliged to speak perpetually of myself. Here then I shall endeavour to preserve all possible moderation; and what the circumstances of the case necessarily extort from me, must in justice be imputed to him, who first moved a prosecution so extraordinary." Demosthenes, in the judicious arrangement of his defence, enters into a full detail of public affairs, and sets his own services in the fairest point of view. Having thus gained the hearts of his hearers, he ventures on the points of law relative to his accounts; and these he dismisses with an affected contempt of his adversary, and a perfect confidence in the merits of his own cause. Then come his objections to the character of his prosecutor, which leads him again to the history of his own administration, the point on which he chiefly relied, and where he had the finest opportunities of displaying his own merit, and of loading Æschines and his adherents with the heaviest imputations, which he does not omit to do in a fearful manner, as traitors to the state, and malicious enemies to those who were distinguished by their zeal, in support of her rights and dignity. He concludes thus, "Hear me, ye immortal gods! and let not these their desires be ratified in heaven! Infuse a better spirit into these men! Inspire their minds with purer sentiments! This is my first prayer. Or if their natures are not to be reformed, on them, on them only discharge your vengeance! Pursue them both by land and sea! Pursue them even to destruction! But to us display your goodness, in a speedy delivery from impending evils, and all the blessings of protection and tranquillity."

Demosthenes, in the true spirit of patriotism, never failed to offer for the acceptance of his countrymen, the best advice under all their difficulties, and in every emergency.

In his first oration against Philip, called "Philippic the first," he says to them, "Your affairs, Athenians, must not be thought desperate, though their situation seems entirely deplorable, for the most shocking circumstance of all our past conduct is really favourable to our future expectations. And what is this? That our own indolence has been the cause of all our present difficulties: for were we thus distressed, in spite of every vigorous effort, which the honour of our state demanded, there were no hope of a recovery. If there be a man in this assembly who thinks that we must find a formidable enemy in Philip, while he views on one hand, the numerous armies which attend him; and on the other, the weakness of the state thus despoiled of its dominions, he thinks justly. Yet let him reflect on this; there was a time, Athenians! when we possessed Pydna, Potidæa, Methonè, and all that country round; when many of those states now subjected to him were free and independent, and more inclined to our alliance than to his. Had then Philip reasoned in the manner, 'How shall I dare to attack the Athenians, whose garrisons command my territory, while I am destitute of all assistance?' he would not have engaged in those enterprises, which are now crowned with success; nor could he have raised himself to this pitch of greatness. No, Athenians! he knew this well, that all these places are but prizes,¹ between the combatants, and ready for the conqueror; that the dominions of the absent devolve naturally to those who are in the field; the possessions of the supine to the active and intrepid. Animated by these sentiments, he overturns whole countries, he holds all people in subjection; some, as by right of conquest; others, under the title of allies and confederates: for all are willing to confederate with those whom they see prepared and resolved to exert them-

¹ His hearers were, of all others, the most devoted to public games, and must therefore have been particularly sensible to the beauty of the comparison.

selves as they ought. And if you, my countrymen! will now be persuaded to entertain the like sentiments; if each of you, renouncing all evasions, will be ready to approve himself an useful citizen, to the utmost that his station and abilities demand; if the rich will be ready to contribute, and the young to take the field: in one word, if you will be yourselves, and banish those vain hopes which every single person entertains, that whilst so many others are engaged in public business, his service will not be required; you then, if heaven so please, shall regain your dominions, recal those opportunities your supineness hath neglected, and chastise the insolence of this man. For you are not to imagine, that, like a god, he is to enjoy his present greatness fixed and unchangeable. No, Athenians! there are who hate him, who fear him, who envy him, even among those seemingly the most attached to his cause. These are passions common to mankind; nor must we think that his friends only are exempted from them; it is true they lie concealed at present, as our indolence deprives them of all resource. But let us shake off this indolence! for you see how we are situated; you see the outrageous arrogance of this man, who does not leave it to your choice whether you shall act, or remain quiet; and is not able to rest satisfied with his present acquisitions, but is ever in pursuit of foreign conquests; and whilst we sit down, inactive and irresolute, encloses us on all sides with his toils."

This orator, in his address, on the "Regulation of the State," where he exerts himself to exhibit before his countrymen, the fatal consequences of receiving contributions from their allies, and lavishing them, with the public revenues, on spectacles and entertainments, speaks as follows: "This I now declare as my opinion, let me not be interrupted by clamour, but hear, and then determine. That as we are now convened about receiving these distributions, so should an assembly be appointed to consider of a general

regulation of the state, and particularly of a provision for our military affairs; and every citizen should discover not only a just attention to all useful measures, but an alacrity to carry them into execution; that so, my countrymen, our hopes of good success may depend upon ourselves. Let all the public treasures, let all the funds for which private fortunes are now so uselessly exhausted, let all those resources which our allies afford, be equitably distributed, and effectually applied; by the soldier, to his support in time of action; by the man who hath passed the age of military duty, as a recompence for his services. Let the duties of the field be discharged by yourselves, duties too important to be intrusted to others; let your armies be composed of citizens; thus let them be paid and provided: so shall they go on with vigour and success; so shall your general really command his forces; and your occupation be no longer to conduct the trials of your officers, nor the result of all your measures prove but an accuser, an impeachment, and a criminal."¹ This oration was so far successful, that early in the following year, the second of the 110th Olympiad, the assembly repealed the scandalous law of Eubulus, which denounced death against any one who should propose the alienation of the theatrical grants: and Demosthenes had the honour of introducing a decree for applying them to the military service; unfortunately, however, it had become too late to derive any considerable advantage from this reformation.

The character of Demosthenes, great and splendid as it certainly was, is said to have been obscured by one failing, that of too strong a desire for money; he is accused of having condescended to indelicate means for the purpose of acquiring riches; and the attention of severe observers was

¹ Demosthenes here alludes to the disobedience and want of discipline in the army, and ascribes them to the necessities of the general, which obliged him to take by force that provision for his soldiers which the state neglected to provide.

diverted from the noble purposes to which he sometimes applied them. In the decline of a life passed in the service of his country, he was accused by Dinarchus, of having suffered himself to be corrupted by Harpalus¹ with a magnificent vase, and a large sum of money. Faction contributed to increase the clamour, which the suspicion of his avarice excited, and both conspired to give credit to the accusation of his enemies; in the heat and violence of public emotion he was condemned, by a style of accusation, (evidence there was none) which in the present day would not be considered to affect his character in the slightest degree. In consequence of his condemnation, he was committed to prison until he should pay the fine of fifty talents imposed on him. The disgrace of the sentence operated powerfully on his health; he grew impatient and irritable, under the rigour of confinement, but by the connivance of his keepers found means to escape, and to fly from Athens. He chose Trœzene for his place of residence, where he remained for some time in a gloomy and dejected state of exile; according to Plutarch, frequently turning his face towards Attica, bursting into tears, and constantly warning the youth who visited him, not to meddle in political affairs.

During the continuation of Demosthenes in this melancholy state, the Greeks impatient of subjection, and still entertaining hopes of recovering their ancient glory, took advantage of Alexander's absence, and began to concert measures for reducing the Macedonian power, and reco-

¹ Harpalus was intrusted with the treasures of Babylon by Alexander the Great. His hopes that his sovereign would perish in the Indian expedition, rendered him dissipated and vicious. When he heard however, that the conqueror was returning in resentment to call him to account, he fled to Athens, with a large amount of money, &c. which he used for the purposes of bribery and corruption. He escaped with impunity to Crete, where he was assassinated by Thimbros, 325 B. C.

vering their independence. The satraps of Asia encouraged them in these dispositions; and Leosthenes, an Athenian of eminence, was made commander of a large body of forces that had been dismissed from the service of the Macedonians, and was supplied by his country with all necessities for the vigorous prosecution of war. In the midst of these preparations, advice arrived of the death of Alexander, which increased the hopes, and animated the exertions of the Greeks. The Athenians in particular despatched their ambassadors to the several states, to urge them to embrace this happy opportunity, and to take up arms for the recovery of their liberty. The states paid the utmost attention to these remonstrances, collected their forces, marched under the command of Leosthenes, gained some advantages over the Macedonians, pressed forward into Thessaly, defeated Antipater, the governor of Macedon, and blocked him up in Lamia, where their general Leosthenes was unfortunately slain as he was visiting the works, and directing the siege, with every prospect of success. Demosthenes, though an exile, could not remain an unconcerned spectator. A zeal for opposing the progress of the Macedonian power had ever been his strongest passion. He still retained the same violent impressions; and delighted to find his countrymen now full of that spirit, which his life had been spent in endeavouring to raise; he attended the Athenian deputies from city to city, assisting and supporting their remonstrances. He was strenuously opposed by Pytheas, an Athenian, who had revolted to Antipater. These two partisans happened to meet in Arcadia, where the heat of their opposition was inflamed to a considerable height of animosity. "Whenever," said Pytheas, "we see asses' milk brought into a family, we conclude that it is distempered; just so, when Athenian ambassadors are introduced into any city, we may presume that it labours under disorders." "True," replied Demosthenes, "and as asses' milk is ever

brought into a family to restore its health, so the Athenians never send ambassadors to any city, but to put an end to the disorders which oppress it." The liveliness of this answer had more effect than all the pathetic remonstrances of Demosthenes. It delighted the imaginations, and flattered the vanity of his countrymen. We may well believe that his condemnation had been unjust, when so slight an incident was sufficient to reconcile him to their favour; he was instantly recalled, a ship was sent to convey him home; and no sooner did he land at the Piræus, than he found himself surrounded by the whole body of his fellow-citizens, and received their congratulations.

The fine formerly imposed upon him could not be remitted, but an expedient was found to elude the law. It had been usual to assign a sum of money to the person entrusted to provide for the celebration of a festival in honour of Jupiter. To this office Demosthenes was appointed, and for the performance of it the people assigned him fifty talents, the sum in which he had been condemned. This great orator, however, did not long enjoy his triumph; a considerable reinforcement which Antipater received from Asia, enabled him to prosecute the war with new vigour against the confederated Greeks, whom he defeated at Cranon, in Thessaly. Each state was now glad by a prompt submission to cultivate the mercy of the conqueror. The most severe terms were imposed on the Athenians; their democratic form of government was changed; they were obliged to receive a Macedonian garrison; and Antipater demanded that ten of their public speakers (in which number Demosthenes was included) should be given up to his vengeance. Alexander had made a similar demand, and the Athenians had bravely refused to comply; but now Demosthenes found them disinclined to protect him, he therefore fled the city, and his fickle countrymen, with

a servile adulation, infamous to themselves, condemned him to death. He gained Calauria, an obscure island near Trœzene, in the bay of Argos, and there took sanctuary in a temple of Neptune. But he was quickly pursued to his place of retirement, by Archias, one of the chief instruments of Antipater's revenge, attended by a party of soldiers. Archias, who had formerly been an actor, appeared before Demosthenes, and affected to commiserate his condition, and to give him hopes of pardon and security. To this the orator replied with cold contempt, "you never could affect me on the stage; nor can your promises now make the least impression." Archias then began to speak in more peremptory and menacing terms. "Now," said Demosthenes, "you pronounce the very dictates of the Macedonian oracle; before, you but acted a part: I desire only a moment's respite, that I may send some directions to my family." He then retired, and seemed employed in writing for awhile; Archias and his soldiers drew near, and found him with his head bowed down and covered. Imputing his behaviour to timidity and unmanly terror, they pressed him to rise. The great Athenian had completely fulfilled his fatal purpose, and perceiving that the poison he had taken was by this time destroying him, he uncovered his head, and fixing his eyes on Archias, said, "you need not scruple to act the part of Creon in the tragedy, and cast out this corpse unburied;" alluding to a speech in the *Antigone* of Sophocles, in which Creon orders, that the body of Polynices should be exposed to the dogs and birds of prey. "O gracious Neptune," added Demosthenes, "I will not defile thy temple; whilst yet I live, I retire from this holy place, which Antipater and the Macedonians have not left unpolluted." He then rose, and desired to be supported out, but as he passed the altar at a feeble and trembling pace, he sunk down, and instantly expired. Thus died this illustrious orator at the age of sixty years. His countrymen after-

wards regretted the death of that man, whom they had so basely delivered up to destruction ; and by honouring his memory, appeared desirous to efface the remembrance of the vileness of their ingratitude.

The orations and epistles of Lysias, Isocrates, Æschines, and Demosthenes, form a valuable and authentic source of information on the political and moral conditions of the Grecian people.

END OF VOLUME THE FIRST.



1

2

3

4

